

Sight and Sound

20
PAGES OF
FILM
REVIEWS

**Sally Potter's
ravishing
'Orlando'**
**Danny DeVito's
vengeful 'Hoffa'**
**Audrey Hepburn's
bohemian style**
**Bernard Rose's
Chicago killer**
**Tarkovsky's
film heroes**

Desire

Tilda Swinton: 'Orlando'



Cinema/Television Arts • Spring 1993

VISIONS

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Sight and Sound



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Video times

Contributors to this issue

David Caute is writing a biography of Joseph Losey

Ian Christie is co-editor of the forthcoming *Eisenstein Rediscovered*

Lizzie Francke is completing a book on women screenwriters

Julian Graffy is working on a study of the Russian symbolist writer, Blok

J. Hoberman's book *Vulgar Modernism* was published last year

Colin McCabe's current project is a book entitled *Broken English*

Andy Medhurst teaches film at the University of Sussex

Kim Newman's novel *Anno Dracula* was published recently

Michael O'Pray is writing a book on Derek Jarman

Tony Rayns' report on Hong Kong for BBC radio was awarded the Arts Journalism prize in the BP Broadcasting Awards in 1991

Mark Sinker is editor of *The Wire*

Rod Stoneman is a commissioning editor at Channel 4

David Thompson recently edited *Levinson*

Elizabeth Wilson's numerous books include *Adorned in Dreams*, a study of the history of fashion

If we were to identify those who have helped to make available the wealth of cinema, television networks would be high on the list. In effect, television has been the national film theatre for the majority of the population, providing generations of viewers with an introduction to the history of cinema. Even today, when its ardour towards cinema has diminished, television can still offer a marvellous range of films, for the passionate aficionado as much as for the curious innocent. Channel 4 is planning a science-fiction film season in April and the BBC, with the cinema programme *Moving Pictures* and its accompanying films, is currently showing how film can be intelligently presented on television.

To sing the praises of television in this way is not to ignore its sometimes cavalier attitude towards film – cutting films for commercial purposes; censoring for reasons of propriety; panning and scanning; scheduling world cinema only at the hour of the wolf, and so on. But it is to recognise that if television abandons its residual responsibilities towards cinema, and sees film simply as product, we shall all be the losers. And no one should be in doubt that the new broadcasting world might easily lead to such a situation – where films are coloured (see Brian Baxter's letter, page 64), where films are seen primarily as schedule-fillers, and where 'foreign' films are dubbed (this has been under consideration at Channel 4), if they are shown at all. Those who care about cinema must persuade television executives that cinema is a central part of our culture – and that it has to be treated with the same respect as opera or art.

Of course television has always had older

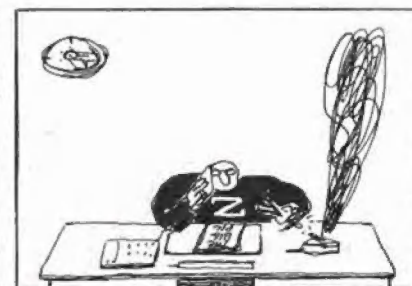
siblings who have helped to disseminate film – not least the National Film Theatre, the independent cinemas and the regional film theatres, all of which continue to be important places not just for screenings, but for discussion of cinema. Over the past few years these have been joined by video, which may have very low status, but is potentially the most democratic medium for making the heritage of cinema available.

Video has made a difference in a number of ways. First, it makes available at cheap(ish) prices a wealth of cinema, from silent films onwards. But video also means that one no longer has to wait for a cinema or television channel to screen a film, nor does one have to see it in an intellectual context provided by someone else. Video makes potential programmers of us all, and certainly gives young people access to films that the archaic cinema classification system would deny them. (This is not to underestimate the dangers in such access.)

But it is not only the video itself, but video stores, retail and rental, that matter – at least potentially. For they often reach parts of the population that other cultural initiatives don't. And the more adventurous of them stock a number of world cinema and classic titles next to the latest blockbusters, helping to dissolve the distinctions between 'high' and 'low' which certain cinematic institutions and television have too often helped to sustain. Given the necessary public investment, such stores might become the most effective disseminators of film history, making available to new groups of viewers films previously denied them. Perhaps the Department of National Heritage ought to set up a pilot?

JERRY ON LINE #1

James Sillavan – Peter Lydon ©



'Jerry, I want to talk about the computer game tie-in, the autographed 1/2 scale multi-weapon launcher promotion; the action-doll spin-off, talking & non-talking; the glow-in-the-dark lunch-box campaign; & there was one other thing that's slipped my mind... oh yes, the script.'

Ice pix

Kim Newman

It hasn't snowed for weeks in the French Alps, leaving the resort full of stylishly snow-suited but fed-up would-be skiers. In the daytime, the all-year snow is slush dotted with shit from horse-drawn taxis and accessory dogs; after nightfall it turns into gritted sheets of deadly ice. On my first night in town, I slipped and landed badly, then spent the rest of the week with my little finger sticking out at an odd angle like an alien from *The Invaders*. The photographer whose cameo I fell on reacted with idiomatic expressions I understood later, thanks to the French subtitles on Stuart Gordon's futuristic prison movie *Fortress*, in which Christophe Lambert and an assortment of hard-boiled cons call each other "motherfucker".

For 21 years, a festival of "étrange, merveilleux, bizarre, surréaliste, magique, fantastique, unique, étonnant" cinema has taken place in Avoriaz, a company town (every franc spent means centimes go to the omnipresent Pierre et Vacances) perched on a mountain top above the village of Morzine. (I know it's perched because I was persuaded to zoom over it in a flying go-cart which felt slightly less safe than a Sopwith camel.) It is notable among festivals of fantasy and horror for its almost embarrassingly distinguished juries; in 1976 Antonioni, Leslie Caron, Ionesco, Jean Seberg, Tati and Agnès Varda sat through *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. At the first festival in 1973, the jury, headed by René Clément, gave the Grand Prix to *Duel*, whose then unknown director Steven Spielberg returned in 1977 to give awards to *Carrie* and *God Told Me To*.

One of the jurors who gave the nod to *Duel* was Christopher Lee, who came back this year as foreman and also fell victim to the ice. He presided magisterially over a collection of worthies which included Marie-Christine Barrault, Miguel Bosé, David Hemmings, Marc Caro, Peter Coyote, Emir Kusturica, Carole Laure, Mathilda May, Bob Swain and Sylvie Vartan. The only juror I sighted (at a party, not a screening) was Slovakian sculptor Yan Zoritchak, but I have every confidence that some of these people saw most of the competition films, if only because the skiing was lousy.

The movies were, for the most part, familiar. Nigel Floyd, who selected last year's London Film Festival horror stream, was on hand to note four of his choices, including the two most acclaimed pictures (*Candyman* and *Braindead*), jostling for prizes. A fifth (*Tale of a Vampire*) was *hors de compétition* because, according to director Shimako Sato, its makers could not afford to have it subtitled and thus rendered eligible to compete with the likes of *Pet Sematary II*, *Hellraiser III: Hell on Earth*, and *Evil Dead III: Army of Darkness*.

The token world premiere was *Accion Mutante*, directed by Almodóvar satellite Alejandro de la Iglesia, which has a wonderful conceit about a group of disabled terrorists who carry out *Mission Impossible*-style assaults on the beautiful and healthy. How-



Peter Jackson's sloppy, gory, funny 'Braindead'

ever, it deteriorates into a space-faring remake of *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*, intermittently hilarious but more like a disappointing second feature than a reputation-establishing debut.

The strange thing about festivals is that they produce bizarre consensuses, with press delegates all taking a stand for or against a film in opposition to prevailing thought. This year's example was *Dust Devil*, shown in what might be called the 'producer's cut' currently disowned by director Richard Stanley. Regular readers will have followed the shapeshifting of this movie about a similarly shapeshifting serial killer in Namibia; from this viewing and the account given in *Sight and Sound* (September 1992) of the material the director wishes to restore, I suspect *Dust Devil* might be stronger in this version, which is brief, hallucinatory, rich and strange.

Also in competition were a much-disliked (except by me) Raúl Ruiz, *Dark at Noon* (*L'Œil qui ment*), featuring John Hurt and a proliferation of miracles, a plague of floating madonnas and David Warner's habit of burying alive the supporting cast; a Roger Corman-produced quickie *To Sleep With a Vampire*, described by director Adam Friedman as "a cross between *The Vampire Lestat* and *My Dinner with André*," in which a stripper and a vampire spend a night arguing about who will commit suicide at dawn; and Avi Nesher's *Doppelgänger*, which demonstrates that Drew Barrymore is shaping up as an actress and which somehow works as weird entertainment – although it bears all the signs of having been written as

a clever whodunnit with an arbitrary monster drafted in at the end.

If the competition offered an odd assortment, some of the other items were even odder, ranging from *Chérie j'ai agrandi le bébé* and *Histoires de fantômes chinois 3* to Barry Shiels' *Motorama*, written by Joseph Minion (*After Hours*, *Vampire's Kiss*), a charmingly sinister road movie about a ten-year-old obsessed with a gas-station competition. *Les Séances Spéciales de Minuit* included films the festival seemed vaguely ashamed of – the obnoxious British goat-shagging horror comedy *Revenge of Billy the Kid* and the wonderfully titled Chinese *Sex and Zen*, about a libertine who has a horse's schlong grafted on to his body. Apparently, the appearance of *Sex and Zen* indicated a return to a 70s Avoriaz tradition of always showing an explicitly erotic (i.e. porno) film.

One of the quirks of the festival in recent years has been that the choice of the prize-winners suggests that celebrity juries are less qualified for the job than real people. The Grand Prix du Jury, the Prix de la Critique and the Prix Haute-Savoie Performances des Effets Spéciaux et de la Technologie went to Peter Jackson's sloppy, gory, funny *Braindead*, while the Prix du Public went to the outstanding film in competition, *Candyman*. One rumour had it that *Braindead* won because the jurors hated its non-stop slapstick so much they reckoned it must be the most effective horror film. *Candyman* did pick up Best Actress and Best Music awards for Virginia Madsen and Philip Glass.

One is left wondering who the festival is for. Hordes of press delegates attend and are seated preferentially, prompting minor riots in the informal queue when the paying public can't get in, while a week's food and lodging in the resort is probably beyond the means of most fans. On the last night, in a spirit of solidarity (and by mistakenly standing in the wrong queue), I experienced this pre-revolutionary feeling of frustration, exacerbated by the *A Tale of Two Cities*-style experience of almost being knocked over by a fur-coated plutocrat's carriage while trying to get in to see *Candyman*. Wandering between the *salles de festival* and the cluttered press complex and trying to avoid the mime artist who invades your crêpe or fondue restaurant, it's hard not to feel the glamorous folk those *Accion Mutante* members want to slaughter are enjoying a party somewhere else, leaving battered journoes to ponder the interviews they have not been able to set up. By the time you've learned who you should be nice to (harassed local press contact, Aurélie; Firmin with his deskload of publicity material; the saintly woman with round-the-clock complementary coffee and croissants) and have wangled passes to *l'espace* Vuarnet, J&B and Charles de Cazenove (we did this by paying tribute to Jean-Claude Romer, the Don Corleone of French fantasy film critics), it's all over. My final impression was of a French attendee whose stolen luggage aroused only gallic shrugs from the gendarmes, complaining "I hate this country, the people are so rude..."

'One rumour had it that "Braindead" won because the jurors hated its non-stop slapstick so much they reckoned it must be the most effective horror film'

Beyond the haze

Lizzie Francke

I switch on a television set in Johannesburg and come face to sincere face with the values of middle America, in the form of William Shatner and his *Rescue 911* show. Somehow the woeful selection of stories about the emergency work of a neo-natal ward in a Cincinnati hospital doesn't have quite the intended emotional pull: "Teach your children how to use the 911 number," signs off the oh-so-deeply concerned voice.

There follows an advertisement for "Toughies - shoes for South Africa's children". Impeccably dressed in starched school uniforms, a group of all-white and mostly blonde little girls and boys put their best feet forward as the ever-so-clipped English voiceover praises the virtues of this pugnaciously named brand. It's like something out of the 50s. Seconds later a trailer exhorts us to tune into tomorrow's slice of *thirtysomething*, "to catch up with the further adventures of Melissa".

This is primetime viewing on South Africa Broadcasting Company's Channel 1. It's a gloriously warm summer's night in early January, and I, the outsider, am feeling faintly disoriented by the selection on offer. Flicking through the television guide, I discover that *The Bold and the Beautiful*, *Dynasty* and *Dallas* are staple fare. They are spliced together by inanely grinning continuity presenters who offer quiz spots and prizes, together with commercials for such unlikely consumer durables as opals.

Apartheid television

Should I expect anything different when I turn on a television set here? SABCTV commenced broadcasting in 1976, the same grim year as the Soweto uprisings, and tele-

vision has been an instrument of state control ever since. Switch channels to CCVTV, which SABC set up when it could no longer ignore the criticism of not catering for black audiences, for whom English is not necessarily a first language, and you find few surprises. 'Contemporary Community Values TV' as a title sounds smug enough, the kind of rhetoric that proves that SABC cares about the majority of the population. But it cares only enough to invest in cut-price, buffoonish sitcoms. Needless to say, the involvement of black writers and directors is negligible. This is apartheid television, a microcosm of the laager state, an old cliché due to expire.

The beginning of January is a particularly unmotivated time, as everyone stirs from the Christmas siesta. But already the frantic talk among the alternative production community is of the imminent changes at SABC. Of immediate concern is the fact that the network will be playing a key role in the coverage of the first non-racial elections, so it is essential that its links with the government are severed.

Luckily April Fool's day does not figure on the South African calendar, since on the first of that month a newly selected executive board will start its tenure at SABC. In the past, its 15 members have been appointed directly by the state president. But for the first time, the selection process in 1993 is to be made publicly accountable, with a series of independent committees putting forward nominations, thus ending the special relationship that has existed between the National Party and the broadcasting service. In the speculation game as to who might be on the new board, the first move is made by the liberal paper, *The Weekly Mail*, which has charged in with a

'This is primetime viewing on South Africa Broadcasting Company's Channel 1. It's a gloriously warm summer's night in early January, and I, the outsider, am feeling faintly disoriented by the selection on offer'

suggestion list of the great and the good. It includes Dr Mamphela Ramphele, deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town, Athol Fugard, Hugh Masekela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Such names may not all be practical choices, but they are a measure of the radical change that is desired. April ushers in a new era for South African broadcasting and change should not just mean that *Rescue 911* is presented from Soweto.

Bootleg 'Fawly Towers'

So much for television, but what about video? Check out the video store in Rocky Street, the café-lined hang-out for the radical Johannesburg left, however, and the only 'underground' titles to be found are bootleg *Fawly Towers*. The irascible Basil and Co's Torquay tales do the business in South Africa, despite the fact that the BBC has never sold the series to the country. The rest of the shop's shelves are lined with the stock Hollywood comedy, horror and action genres, the last mostly home grown and of the sub-Sylvester Stallone and Chuck Norris with sub-machine guns variety. The classics section reveals an interesting choice - *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*.

There are few surprises on the commercial circuit, too. But the alternative video distribution networks have been allowed to surface over the last couple of years. Responsible for circulating much of the banned material in the 80s, the Film Resource Unit now manages an extensive library, and subscribers can sample documentaries of a range - from *Biko: The Spirit Lives On* to *Eyes on the Prize* - that one would expect from a country attempting to nourish itself on a history that has been denied.

Meanwhile, the Film and Allied Workers Organisation, the lobbying and educational initiative started in 1989, takes a video suitcase around to the townships and rural areas. This might seem a bit of a luxury for a village with no mains supply, but the creation of a visually literate culture is a major priority. Instructional aims are counterbalanced with entertainment; Aids awareness videos play alongside Eisenstein and Idrissa Ouedraogo. No surprises here either, though Charlie Chaplin adds a twist.

It's a predictable history with few kinks, but the picture, like everything else in this country, is getting a little wavy as it tunes into something new. Trying to understand what is going on at the moment is like focusing the image: brief moment of clarity, but more often a blur. But it would be too simple to imagine that for South Africa's visual culture it is a case of apartheid fallacies making way for the politically correct. It's another preconception that video and film-maker Shane Mohabier disposes of, his words echoing the sentiments of others. He calls it the "Rambo and Tambo" effect, with political sloganising deemed as damaging as the gladiatorial antics of the man with the pecs.

If South Africa has woken up from a long fitful sleep, it is now a country that wants to dream not in divisive black and white, but in colour.

MARCH ON THE SABC

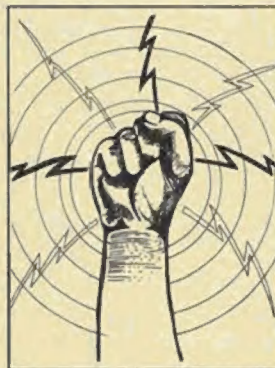
- The people shall broadcast!
- Free the SABC — Stop Nat propaganda!
- Democratise radio and TV!

Date: Saturday 25 August

Time: 10 am

Starting point: Corner of Cornhill and Plein Streets, Johannesburg

(near St Mary's Cathedral)



Issued by the Campaign for Open Media

Moving pictures: Quentin Green, chief executive of the smug Contemporary Community Values TV; and a poster demanding change at the SABC



HEROES AND MEMORIES



With 'JFK' and 'Malcolm X', DeVito's 'Hoffa' forms a trio of movies which excavate the 60s, dissolve distinctions between history and fiction, and invent heroes who never were. By J. Hoberman

Talking heads: Jack Nicholson as working-class hero Jimmy Hoffa, who held the Teamsters Union in his vice-like grip, in Danny DeVito's film

● Total cinema may not yet have arrived, but Americans already live in the world of total docu-drama. The television induced symbiosis of entertainment, history and politics is so complete that no one finds it remarkable when, for example, *Star Trek* memorabilia is enshrined alongside actual moon rocks and Lindbergh's *Spirit of St Louis* in the National Air and Space Museum, the nation's equivalent of the Sistine Chapel.

The recent election saw President Bush trade shots with the animated cartoon character Bart Simpson, while his running mate engaged in a long-running struggle with a fictional journalist, the eponymous protagonist of the television show *Murphy Brown*. Woody Allen's *Husbands and Wives* is but a footnote to the far more compelling spectacle afforded by the disintegration of his alliance with Mia Farrow – a complex public performance that, precisely because it can never be turned into a movie, will eventually be seen as his richest, most reflexive work since *Annie Hall*.

Movies chase news stories chase movies. Defining events in three-word phrases, the New York tabloids provide producers with instant high-concept and pre-sold public awareness. The Amy Fisher case, in which a spoiled Long Island teenager shot the wife of her alleged lover, an automechanic more than twice her age, proved the most resilient of the numerous real-life *Fatal Attractions* which have materialised over the past five years. For the first time in recorded history, all three networks commissioned movies on the same subject, and two actually programmed their product head to head. Hyped by an endless series of ancillary news broadcasts and talk-show appearances, the Amython surpassed all expectations and drew the greatest audiences of the season.

In the context of such a world, inexorably transformed into a representation of itself, the big-budget film biography – once the ultimate middlebrow mode – has come to seem the quintessential Hollywood genre. Self-proclaimed counter-myths like *JFK*, *Malcolm X* and *Hoffa* – Danny DeVito's \$45 million portrait of Jimmy Hoffa, one-time president of America's largest union and a mob pal who disappeared under sinister circumstances in 1975 – are to the current moment what the Spielberg-Lucas mega-fantasy was to the Age of Reagan or the epic of antiquity to the early 50s: spectacular displays of pure movie might, would-be interventions, contributions to (or perhaps substitutions for) a national discourse. Set free of their historical moment, inflated almost beyond recognition, deities like John, Malcolm and Jimmy – each with his own constituency – float above our heads like the cartoon-character balloons of the Thanksgiving Day parade.

There's no denying Hoffa's appeal as a working-class hero. No less an authority than

Sylvester Stallone chose to play a labour leader modelled on Hoffa as his follow-up to *Rocky* in the 1978 *F.I.S.T.* But what does it mean when Jack Nicholson is cast as Jimmy Hoffa – or rather, when American labour's most controversial figure is recast as American cinema's official nonconformist? Lips clamped, jaw screwed down, forehead willed into an unlikely cube, the face of Nicholson's Hoffa seems sculpted with a wrench – the American worker as Frankenstein's monster. For the first half of this 140-minute bio-pic, Nicholson even eschews irony, fashioning his rants out of fire and spittle. Only later, when Hoffa is investigated by the Senate and questioned by the young Robert Kennedy, does he cultivate a tight-mouthed smirk to complement his bulldog glare.

Born in 1913 in Brazil, Indiana, the actual Hoffa organised his first strike at age 19 and soon afterwards joined the Detroit local of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. He was, by all accounts, a brilliant organiser and a sophisticated negotiator. He was also an opportunist who was trained by the Teamsters' Trotskyite militants (and later helped to purge them), who made a profitable alliance with organised crime to support both his rise to power within the union and the union's power without. Beloved by his rank and file, even after the Teamsters were expelled from the AFL-CIO in 1957, Hoffa was the most notorious labour leader of the late 50s and early 60s – largely due to his performance in televised congressional hearings that pitted him against his nemesis, the future Attorney General.

An acrid romance with a flashback structure clamped in the vice of Nicholson's performance, *Hoffa* gets its bleak coloration from DeVito's worldview, its ahistoric scope from David Mamet's script, and its context from the cartoons that surround it. Hoffa forges the Teamsters Union in the soul-freezing darkness of an endless night. The brutal weather, the torch-lit demonstrations, the mass violence, the outsized backdrop of satanic factories, the sombre score all suggest an alternative *Batman* in which mutant versions of the Joker and the Penguin battle the bosses for social justice – or is it a *Blade Runner* prequel in which a replicant Hoffa is programmed with a variety of non-existent memories?

Retouching the past

Oliver Stone's *JFK* is as filled with simulacra as a dissertation on Baudrillard. Skittering back and forth in time, mixing documentary footage with pseudo-newsreels and flashbacks shot as if through surveillance cameras, arranging conversations between historical personages and invented characters, the movie doesn't have the faintest embarrassment in flashing a photograph of Gary Oldman ►

◀ posed as Lee Harvey Oswald posing with his rifle and asking us to notice how the shadows show that this picture of 'Oswald' has obviously been retouched.

Malcolm X is more seamless than *JFK*, waiting for its finale before it begins to mix up the real and the reconstructed in a newsreel montage that draws attention away from the movie's artifice and gratifies our desire to see Malcolm himself. But *X* is even more insistent in inscribing actual celebrities, including Nelson Mandela and director Spike Lee – who, like DeVito in *Hoffa*, chose to cast himself as the great man's fictional best friend. And why not? Thanks to *X*, Malcolm has joined the stable of illustrious American heroes – Babe Ruth, James Dean, Humphrey Bogart, Mark Twain – currently represented by the Curtis Management Group of Indianapolis. But of course, the career moves other celebrities make once dead, John Kennedy accomplished while alive.

JFK, as Kennedy reinvented his identity after achieving the White House, was made for the media – the first American president born in the twentieth century and the first to grow up in Hollywood's world. His multi-millionaire father was famous for bankrolling the movies of his mistress Gloria Swanson and masterminded the series of mergers that created RKO; in 1952, the year 300 Washington DC correspondents voted Jack Kennedy "handsomest

member of the House of Representatives", the future president was elected to the US Senate in the most calculated, expensive and technologically advanced campaign in Massachusetts history. The young Kennedy was promoted as a national celebrity. *Life* magazine went 'court-ing' with the Senator, featuring him and fiancée Jacqueline Bouvier on the cover, then returned to report on their wedding a few months later.

A political Elvis

The bestselling, Pulitzer Prize-winning *Profiles in Courage*, a book of popular history virtually ghostwritten by Theodore Sorenson (and paradoxically celebrating those politicians who defied public opinion to act according to individual conscience), established Kennedy's intellectual credibility and heralded his entry on to the national stage. At the 1956 Democratic convention, he narrated the party film and narrowly lost the vice-presidential nomination. As the national ticket went down, his drive for the 1960 nomination took off. *Time's* cover on "the Democratic whiz of 1957" described Kennedy as a co-ed's dream, a political Elvis – a politician mobbed by autograph-seeking college students and assaulted by amorous admirers. "America's politics would now be also America's favourite movie, America's first soap opera, America's best-seller," Norman Mailer

predicted in his celebrated *Esquire* piece on the 1960 Democratic Convention.

The 1,000-day reign that opened two months after the 1960 election and ran into 1963 was America's first and most compelling mini-series – born in manufactured glamour, ending in televised catastrophe. Even then, it inspired a number of movies that represented American politics as the province of demagogues, black-mailers and conspiracies, putting one president after another in the light of some personal or public Armageddon. (Indeed, less than a month after JFK's inauguration, Fox purchased the rights to *The Enemy Within*, the new Attorney General's account of his investigation into the Teamsters.) Fittingly, the afterlife of the Kennedy administration's "one brief shining moment" has thrived on declassified information – the tawdry revelations of the president's tangled love life that emerged in the aftermath of Watergate; the ambiguous Missile Crisis data released after the Soviet collapse – as well as on all manner of freelance conspiracy-theorising. The virtually socialist-realist idealisations of the first made-for-television portraits have been 'realistically' tarnished by subsequent mini-series – not to mention the televised trial of William Kennedy Smith or the entire career of Senator Ted Kennedy – but the thrill remains.

In a sense, *JFK* is a gilded frame around the first and greatest of Kennedy death films – the basis for virtually all assassination research and the 'clock' by which the Dealey Plaza drama is played out – the 8mm home movie that was shot by Abraham Zapruder and immediately turned over to *Life* magazine. Indeed, Jim Garrison's single greatest achievement may have been to subpoena the Zapruder film – something Time-Life went to the Supreme Court to prevent. (That Time-Life is now Time Warner, producer of *JFK*, only shows that what goes around comes around.)

Not just an amazing snuff film and the vulgar modernist antecedent for the 'structural' cinema of the late 60s, the Zapruder film was made to be blown up, slowed down, computer-enhanced and overinterpreted until not only the notion of documentary investigation but the laws of physics are subsumed in its seething grain. To study the Zapruder footage is to enter a world of subatomic particles somewhere beyond the outer limits of photographic representation. Lee's equivalent is the amateur video taken of suspect Rodney King being beaten by half a dozen Los Angeles policemen – a piece of evidence whose rejection as proof of police brutality directly triggered the 1992 Los Angeles riot.

So-called historiophoty is more obviously shaped than historiography, but in producing millions of eye-witnesses, it is also more effective. Arguing in favour of official spectacles,



Nothing but the truth: Kevin Costner as Jim Garrison, always looking for what's right, in Oliver Stone's *'JFK'*

Machiavelli noted that the populace based its judgment more on appearance than reality, "for sight alone belongs to everyone, but understanding to few". No less than individuals, nations orchestrate their memories in accordance with current, not altogether conscious, desires. (If the King jury had seen the Zapruder footage, they might have decided Kennedy committed suicide.)

That history is made to serve the present was the dilemma elucidated by John Ford at the dawn of the Cold War. The paradoxical ending of his prophetic *Fort Apache* (1948) debunks the factual basis of the Custer myth only to argue in favour of officially falsified history, "correct in every detail," as John Wayne says of the painting he and we know to be pure invention. *Fort Apache* invites the viewer to suspend disbelief and participate in a conscious rewriting of the national past – even at the price of repeating past disasters. Defeat has its uses.

To consecrate his reign, the first American president born after the Second World War and the first to grow up in the world of television kneels at JFK's grave in the sort of amplified solitude that recalls Walter Benjamin's characterisation of movie realism as an "orchid in the hothouse of technology". And just as Bill Clinton's election is reified as the triumph of the 60s generation, so Lee and Stone commit to celluloid the conventional wisdom of the 60s

counterculture: Amerikkka is racist, Vietnam sucked, the Music mattered, Kennedy was putched. (*Hoffa* adds the further 60s truth that, in America, social reform has almost never been accomplished without violence.)

Yet JFK, Malcolm X and *Hoffa* are all hagiographic – their heroes are updated Mr Smiths, proof that nothing in America succeeds like the cult of personality. That thing called the 60s is poised to re-enter history as the decade of dead heroes standing in for non-existent social movements. X's Malcolm is represented as a model of personal rectitude, and Lee even tricks the FBI into helping him out. (The agent bugging Malcolm's telephone tells his colleague that, "compared to King, this guy is a monk".) *Hoffa*, too, is portrayed as monogamous, even ascetic, single-mindedly dedicated to the well-being of his union. And where the actual Garrison was a roughish con artist, JFK makes him a sober family man whose life is set in contrast, not only to Kennedy's, but to the orgiastic masquerades and candlelit seductions of the film's homosexual conspirators.

A living politician is answerable for his actions. A dead symbol can be all things to all people. Did Kennedy start the Vietnam war so he could end it? Is Malcolm X a Horatio Alger figure, the embodiment of black rage, an invention of Time Warner? Malcolm has been invoked as a model by the militant rap group

Public Enemy and the conservative justice Clarence Thomas, defended as "Reaganesque" by academic Shelby Steele even as he is reclaimed by the very Nation of Islam which most likely assassinated him. The fallible Jesse Jackson is superseded by the man Marlon Riggs called "the quintessential unfinished text". (Pace *Fort Apache*, that text allows for erasures: X drops the more extravagant details of the Muslim cosmology, downplays the doomsday tone of Malcolm's rhetoric, and omits specific embarrassments such as his meeting with the Ku Klux Klan or intermittent Jew-baiting.)

Public enemy

Call it "correct in every detail". The pin-up *Hoffa* has been even more drastically re-configured. His mantra, as articulated in a Vegas hotel presumably built by gangsters with loans from the union pension fund, is that "the Teamsters led the American working man into the middle class" – and then just withered away. *Hoffa* goes beyond the George Bernard Shaw maxim that trade unionism is the capitalism of the working class to follow *The Godfather* in suggesting that organised crime is the trade unionism of the ruling class.

Although Mamet and DeVito portray Robert Kennedy as a dangerous publicity hound, they don't buy the story broken in the *New York Post* at the height of the anti-Stone campaign (and immediately forgotten) that "Hoffa Had the Mob Murder JFK". Still, their anti-psychological, non-judgmental portrait of Hoffa is the most perverse attempt to storm the 60s pantheon. After all, the Kennedys had made Jimmy Hoffa their public enemy number one – nothing less than a domestic Krushchev. And in the wake of the Kennedy assassination, Hoffa went well beyond Malcolm's contemptuous characterisation of the event as "chickens coming home to roost" by publicly gloating that Robert Kennedy was "just another lawyer now" and ordering the flags at Teamster headquarters to be raised from their deferential half-mast.

A particular triptych stands complete: the seething vacuum of JFK, representing the greatest 'unsolved' crime in American history, the key to the 60s, the event that supposedly plunged the nation into the nightmarish alternative universe from which it has yet to awake, is now flanked by reverential portraits of the two political figures most publicly dismissive of that event. That these three irreconcilable narratives can exist simultaneously within the grand spectacle suggests a triumph of multiculturalism that transcends school curricula. Another martyr has been identified, another historical mission labelled, another chunk of popular memory defined. One more void is filled by a movie representing that which is no longer there.

'Hoffa' opens on 19 March



Model of rectitude: Denzel Washington as Spike Lee's Malcolm X, a ghost who haunts the present

Walter Donohue, the film's story editor, talks with director Sally Potter about her adaptation of 'Orlando'

IMMORTAL LONGING

In the 70s and 80s, Sally Potter was a controversial figure in British independent cinema, making films that blended narrative invention with theoretical and formalist concerns. Her 1979 short *Thriller* has long been a staple on film courses for its deconstruction of opera's sexual politics through a re-reading of *La Bohème*. She followed it up with her feature debut *The Gold Diggers* (1983) with Julie Christie, and *The London Story*, a technicolour spy musical. More recently, Potter has worked in television: making *Women in Soviet Cinema* (1988) and *Tears, Laughter, Fear and Rage* (1986), a four-part series on the politics of emotions.

Potter's new feature *Orlando* is produced by her own company Adventure Pictures, which she formed with Christopher Sheppard. A free reading of Virginia Woolf's historical fantasia, *Orlando* represents Potter's first venture into more mainstream narrative, but it also continues some of her past concerns. Her Russian connection carries on in the co-production deal with Lenfilm and the use of a Russian crew that included Elem Klimov's cinematographer Alexei Rodionov. Potter also co-wrote the score with David Motion; her past work as a composer includes the song cycle *Oh Moscow*, and she has also run her own dance ensemble, the Limited Dance Company. All these diverse concerns find their way into *Orlando*, which with its elaborate staging and exuberant cultivation of artifice gives a startling new twist to the British costume drama. *Sight and Sound*

● Location: Blackbird Yard, Ravenscroft Road, and like birds alighting on a field Sally Potter and I are sitting here in her workroom in the renovated London shoe factory where one draft after another of the script of her new film *Orlando* was exposed, criticised, knocked into shape. Almost a year since the troop set off for St Petersburg to film the Frost Fair sequences, this interview took place.

Walter Donohue: It's strange to be sitting again at this table where so many of our script discussions took place. Can you describe something of the process of adapting Virginia Woolf's novel into your own film?

Sally Potter: It was a process of reading, re-reading and reading again; writing, rewriting and writing again. Cutting characters, stripping things right back to the bone. I did endless skeleton diagrammatic plots, all to find the guiding principle and then reconstruct the story from the inside out. I also went back to research Woolf's sources. And then, finally, I put the book away entirely for at least the last year of writing and treated the script as something in its own right, as if the book had never existed. I felt that by the time we were getting ready to shoot I knew the book well enough, was enough in touch with its spirit, that it would have been a disservice to be slavish to it. What I had to find was a live, cinematic form, which meant being ruthless with the novel. In other words, I learnt that you have to be cruel to the novel in order to be kind to the film.

Where did your interest in 'Orlando' begin?

When I first read *Orlando* as a teenager, I remember watching it as a film. And from the first moment I considered doing an adaptation, I thought I could see it, even if parts were out of

focus. The book has a live, visual quality to it – which was affirmed in Woolf's diaries, where she said that what she was attempting with *Orlando*, unlike her other books, was an "exteriorisation of consciousness". She was finding images for a stream of consciousness, instead of using a literary monologue.

But the single idea that was sustaining enough for me to live with the project for so long was immortality, or the question: what is the present moment? And the second idea was the change of sex, which provides the more obvious narrative structure, and is a rich and lighter way of dealing with the issues between men and women. The more I went into this area, and tried to write a character who was both male and female, the more ludicrous maleness and femaleness became and the more the notion of the essential human being – that a man and woman both are – predominated. Clearly, here was just a character called Orlando: a person, an individual, a being who lived for 400 years, first as a man and then as a woman. At the moment of change, Orlando turns and says to the audience, "Same person, different sex." It's as simple as that.

But Orlando – a character who is both a man and a woman – has to be embedded in an actor. And you chose a woman to play this part. How did you deal with the maleness and femaleness of the characterisation?

We worked primarily from the inside out and talked all the time about Orlando as a person rather than as a man or a woman. Then there was a mass of small decisions which added up to a policy about how to play the part – for instance, we decided on no artificial facial hair for Orlando the man. Whenever I've seen women playing men on screen, it's been a mistake to try to make the woman look too much like a man, because you spend your time as a viewer looking for the glue, the joins between the skin and the moustache. I worked on the assumption that the audience was going to know from the beginning that here was a woman playing a man, and so the thing to do was to acknowledge it and try to create a state of suspended disbelief.

I was attracted to Tilda Swinton for the role on the basis of seeing her in Peter Wollen's film *Friendship's Death*, where she had a cinematic presence that wasn't aligned to what our cinematographer Alexei Rodionov called "crawling realism", and in the Manfred Karge play *Man to Man*, in which there was an essential subtlety about the way she took on male body language and handled maleness and femaleness. Tilda brought her own research and experience to bear on the part; as her director I worked to help her to achieve a quality of transparency on the screen. The biggest challenge for both of us was to maintain a sense of the development of the character even when we were shooting out of continuity and with the ending still uncertain. The intention was that there would be a seamless quality about the development that would carry that suspended disbelief about maleness, femaleness and immortality. **The idea of suspended disbelief – was direct address to camera one of the devices used to maintain this?**

The speeches of Orlando to the audience took many forms during the writing, and during ►



Double vision: Tilda Swinton, who plays Orlando, above; Sally Potter, the film's director, opposite





A kind of innocence: Tilda Swinton as Orlando and Billy Zane as Shelmordine, her true knight and equal

◀ the shooting they were the hardest things to get right. The phrase I used to Tilda was "golden thread": we were trying to weave a golden thread between Orlando and the audience through the lens of the camera. One of the ways we worked in rehearsal was to have Tilda address those speeches directly to me, to get the feeling of an intimate, absolutely one-to-one connection, and then to transfer that kind of address into the lens. Part of the idea was also that direct address would be an instrument of subversion, so that set against this historical pageant is a complicity with the audience about the kind of journey we're on. If it worked, I hoped it would be funny; it would create a connection that made Orlando's journey also the audience's journey; and most important, it would give the feeling that although Orlando's journey lasted 400 years and was set in the past, this was essentially a story about the present.

The function of the voiceover at the beginning and end is to dispatch with certain issues as neatly as possible – for instance, the film begins with Orlando's voice saying, "There can be no doubt about his sex." I also wanted to state that though Orlando comes from a certain background, which has certain implications, he is separated from this background by a kind of innocence. One is born into a class background, but that can change.

Was there any governing idea behind the transitions from one period to another?

I tried to find a way of making transitions through a characteristic of the period (dress, poetry, music), that could launch us into the next section. And what I found was that you can be much bolder than I ever thought in the way you jump, cinematically, from one period to another. Ironically, the most striking transition is where Orlando enters the maze in the eighteenth century and emerges into the Victorian era, which was the one I hadn't worked out in the script and was still struggling with in the shoot. The decision to effect the transition by having Orlando enter the maze was made simply because there was a maze at the location which I knew I wanted to use somewhere; its final form was found in the cutting room.

Perhaps we could discuss one or two of the myriad aspects of the craft of film-making – such as framing?

Framing is the magic key, the door through which you're looking. The quest in shooting *Orlando* was not just for a frame or possible place to put the camera, but for the *only* place. This became my driving visual obsession. To transcend the arbitrariness of where you put the camera became a joint process between Alexei and myself. And one of his great strengths as a cinematographer is that he won't settle for an obvious or easy visual solution. He's trying to peel back the layers and find this transparent place – and this search for the right frame became a parallel process to trying to achieve a transparency of performance.

Technically, we worked with a monitor, and every frame was adjusted – up, down, right, left – until there was a frame which he and I agreed was *the* frame. If we couldn't agree it was an unhappy moment, and a lot of energy was spent on that kind of tussling. Alexei's intention is to be a mediumistic cinematographer; he says that the greatest compliment Klimov paid him after *Come and See* was that Klimov felt as if he had shot the film himself. That's a very ego-free statement for a cinematographer to make, and for me it was an incredible gift, as well as a challenge that was initially almost too great to meet, because it put the gaze back on me: what did I really want? I didn't always know what I wanted; I was groping to start with. But by the end of the shoot I felt that Alexei and I had one eye.

You're credited, with David Motion, with the music for the film. How did that come about?

A lot of people commented that sound was often mentioned in the script. And I wanted a sound effect structure and score that would mirror the scale of the film. Our policy during the mix was to make a broad dynamic range and then highlight certain evocative or pointed sounds – such as the peacock's cry when Orlando is walking down the gallery of long white drapes, or the sound of the ice cracking, or of rain taking over the soundtrack.

As far as the music is concerned, I originally wanted to use Arvo Part's *Cantus*, which I had been listening to over and over again. I even got

permission, but it became clear that to use it would create as many problems as it would solve – it was a piece in its own right that couldn't be cut or repeated. So I started on a journey to find out what it was about that piece of music that was appropriate to the film, and then to look for another way of achieving this. What I discovered was that a lot of the music I had been listening to for pleasure, and as a sort of spiritual reference for the film, was based on an A-minor triad, or the related C-major triad. This seemed too much of a coincidence, so I drew up a chart of the score and we mapped out a structure based on the A-minor triad and related keys. And the more I got to think about the score, the more I was hearing the music in my head. So eventually we decided to go into a studio to record what I was hearing using my own voice. I recorded an 8-track voice piece for each of the major cues and David Motion wrote instrumental parts around them. Some of the voice parts were lost, but others became the background to the cues, or were fitted around sections he had written and arranged. Fred Frith then improvised some guitar lines around the cues. The end song was written slightly differently: I wrote the lyrics and suggested the key; David provided some musical cues on tape; Jimmy Sommerville wrote the vocal tune and then David arranged it. It was a score that was made possible through the use of a sampler and the editorial capacity that machine gives you. It was a score that was constructed rather than composed in the usual way.

The novel ends in 1928, but in order to be faithful to the idea of making the film contemporary, it had to finish in 1993. How did you devise the last section?

It reached its final form after everything else had been shot. What became clear was that the correct way to approach it was not just to stick an ending on the story, but to think myself into Virginia Woolf's consciousness. What might she have done with the story had she lived until 1993? It was a strange game, a sort of second guessing that consisted in me re-reading what she had written after *Orlando*; her thoughts on issues post-1928. It seemed clear that I had to refer to the First and Second World Wars and the effect they had on consciousness. And because the book itself is almost a running commentary on the history of literature as the vehicle for consciousness, there had to be a cinematic equivalent of what had happened to that kind of consciousness post-war. In other words, the fracturing of that consciousness and the arrival of the electronic age.

What do you want the audience to feel when they've reached the end?

I hope they are thrilled by the rush into the present, by the notion that finally we are here, now. And a feeling of hope and empowerment about being alive and the possibility of change – which comes through the words of the song and the expression on Orlando's face. I want people to feel humanly recognised, that their inner landscape of hope and desire and longing has found some kind of expression on screen. A gut feeling of release and relief and hope.

'Orlando' opens on 12 March and is reviewed on page 48 of this issue

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Gang feuds, a troubled teenage romance and political paranoia in 1960 Taiwan are mixed in Edward Yang's extraordinary epic 'A Brighter Summer Day'. Tony Rayns recalls visiting the set and reflects on Yang's achievement

LONESOME TONIGHT

Jinguashi, November 1990

After a week sitting through day-long screenings of the past year's Hong Kong and Taiwan movies (as a member of the jury for the *China Times Express* Film Awards), nothing could have been more welcome than an invitation from Edward Yang to visit the shoot of his new film, *A Brighter Summer Day*. A 45-minute drive up into the hills north of Taipei brings us to Jinguashi, where a cluster of abandoned Japanese-style buildings overlooks a thickly wooded valley. One of the sturdier houses has been converted to serve as one of the film's prime locations: the home of the Zhang family.

Yang is shooting a simple domestic scene. Xiao Si'r, the younger son in the family, has gone to bed to read by torchlight. His bed is actually the lower bunk in a cupboard-like space off the living room, and he has slid the cupboard door closed in order to be alone. His eldest sister Juan (played by Wang Juan, also one of the director's assistants and a dialogue coach) is whispering to him in the dark. They're working in very low light levels and recording synch sound, and several takes are needed before Yang is satisfied. There are the usual odd moments of horseplay between takes, but the conspicuously young crew works most of the time with seriousness and concentration.

During a break in shooting, Yang guides us around the site, which was built in the early twentieth century as a holiday villa for the Japanese imperial family. No emperor ever stayed there, but Hirohito once visited during his days as the Crown Prince. The entire complex has been abandoned for years, and there are plans to demolish it to make way for an amusement park. The situation is rich in ironies. The film is recreating a world and climate that Yang knew in his schooldays, but Taiwan's pervasive indifference to its own history has erased nearly all traces of even the recent past in Taipei itself. Hence the retreat into these hills to find suitable buildings; and hence the race to beat the wreckers from the amuse-

ment park company. Given the film's storyline – and the eventual fate of Xiao Si'r – it's oddly moving that a cupboard that once stored Japanese imperial bedlinen should be pressed into service as a bunk bed for a mixed-up 14-year-old Chinese schoolboy.

Taipei, May 1991

Back in Taipei to see the fine-cut of the film at the CMPC sound-mix studio on the edge of town. Watching it is an overwhelming and emotionally exhausting experience, and not just because the integral version runs nearly four hours. The film has a structure and angle of approach unlike any other I've seen. Rather than working its way through a neatly pre-digested storyline, it plunges the audience into a vast social fresco (there are well over 100 speaking parts) and locates its central troubled romance in a web of other relationships, allegiances and incidents. As a result, it illuminates questions of social and political context in a way that few other films even dream of doing. But this does not diffuse its emotional impact; on the contrary, it gives the climactic act of violence a weight of meaning that makes it all the more devastating.

The Chinese title, *Guling Jie Shaonian Sha Ren Shijian*, translates literally as 'The Boy in the Murder Incident on Guling Street' (the street was known in the Taipei of the 60s for its stalls selling second-hand books to schoolkids and students). The English title is a possibly misheard line from the lyrics of Elvis Presley's 'Are You Lonesome Tonight?', as transcribed for a budding Taipei garage band by a girl with secondary-school English. Both titles resonate throughout the film. The Chinese title identifies the protagonist, Xiao Si'r, and provides a clue to the way the story will resolve itself – thereby helping to guide the viewer through the narrative density of the movie. The English title both evokes and summarises the appeal of America to residents of Taiwan, now as then. The dream of a better future is what drives virtually everyone in the film, and the fact that

that future has an American accent is a measure of what's wrong with their lives.

Xiao Si'r is the fourth child (of five) in the family of a bookish civil servant. He takes after his father in many ways, but he's an academic disappointment. He has failed to win a place in Day School for his years in junior high, and so has to make do with a place in the less prestigious Night School. Most of his friends are members of the Little Park Gang; they, too, are boys from Mainland China families that moved to Taiwan after the Communist victory of 1949. Their greatest enemies are the tough kids of the 217 Gang, sons of soldiers and named after the military housing estate where they live. But Xiao Si'r is too much of a loner to join the gang. He has the makings of an intellectual: the first thing we see him do is steal the flashlight he uses to read and write his diary in bed.

The first time Xiao Si'r meets Ming is one Saturday afternoon in the school clinic. He knows that she is (was?) the girlfriend of Honey, founder of the Little Park Gang, who is in hiding somewhere in the south after killing a rival in a gang fight, so he deliberately represses his interest in her. But their nascent relationship (which eventually flowers after Honey returns and is murdered by the leader of the 217 Gang) drags Xiao Si'r into involvement in the city's escalating gang feuds. And on the stormy night which sees an all-out bloody attack on the 217 Gang, Xiao Si'r returns home to discover that his father has been hauled off for grilling about links with Communists. The boy's situation is complicated further by official disapproval of what is seen as his under-age romance.

This outline may suggest something of the film's narrative complexity, but it cannot begin to evoke the way Yang interweaves the central relationship between Xiao Si'r and Ming with other characters and relationships to produce a comprehensive picture of a society in submerged crisis. There was a real-life teenage murder incident in Taipei in 1960, but Yang is not interested in dredging up the facts of the case in the cause of period reportage or in recreating images from his childhood memories for their own sake. His film aims to dissect the roots of a malaise, the problems that afflicted his parents' generation as well as his own, and it is essential to his method that nothing in the story – the climactic murder least of all – should be reducible to a single, symbolic meaning. On the contrary, he needs a sense of social profusion to make his point that Taiwan's problems were pervasive and not easily grasped at the time. This is the one valid point of comparison between *A Brighter Summer Day* and Hou Xiaoxian's film *A City of Sadness* (Beijing Chengshi, 1989); both films look back to 'vanished' periods in Taiwan's past and aim to define them in ways that would have eluded those living through them. Since neither period was exactly happy for the island or its people, this work is what Germans would call *Trauerarbeit*.

Non-Chinese viewers will need at least a sketchy sense of the historical and political background to get to grips with the film's ►

It gets interesting when a good guy does something bad:

Zhang Zhen as Xiao Si'r, a loner who has the makings of an intellectual, in Edward Yang's 'A Brighter Summer Day'



◀ implications, if not its emotional thrust. The island of Taiwan reverted to Chinese rule when the Japanese surrendered in 1945 (it had been a Japanese colony for around 50 years, and much of its social infrastructure – from the school system to the design of houses – was essentially Japanese). China's KMT (Nationalist) leader Chiang Kai-Shek moved quickly to take control of Taiwan, perhaps foreseeing that the island would become his bolt hole in the event of a Communist victory in the Civil War. When that victory came, in 1949, there was a massive exodus of people, capital, antiques and material resources from the Mainland to the island. Since then, Taiwan has been the last bastion of the old 'Republic of China'.

In the 50s, Taiwan became an American colony in all but name. The Korean War and the consequent Cold War with China necessitated the stationing of large numbers of US troops on the island, and they brought with them music, movies, comics and all the other flotsam of American popular culture. Their presence also fuelled the growing anti-Communist paranoia, resulting in a series of spy-scares like the one shown in the film. At the same time, there was constant tension between native Taiwanese (not so much the island's oppressed ethnic minorities as the Chinese who had been settling there for some three centuries) and the newly arrived Mainlanders, who reserved power and privilege for themselves. And this, in turn, produced predictable rivalries and feuds between Taiwanese and Mainlander street gangs made up of disaffected kids with no higher aim than to fight for territory and supremacy. Behind the rise of the violent street gangs lay the fact that war and political upheavals had shattered the traditional Chinese 'extended family' for many of Taiwan's residents. In the absence of the old familial constraints, kids were suddenly comparatively free to run wild, get laid, play Elvis Presley songs and get into gang fights.

Meticulously recreating the Taipei of 1960, *A Brighter Summer Day* offers an extraordinarily detailed cross-section of this turbulent society, using each of its many leading characters as a thread through the labyrinth. Ming, for example, comes from a broken family; her father is dead, she is an only child, and her ailing mother works as a housemaid to support herself and her daughter. This background helps to explain Ming's problems with boyfriends ("You're like all the others," she tells Xiao Si'r when she finally walks away from him, "You just want to change me"), but it also shows her as a victim of circumstances any earlier Chinese generation would have known how to resolve. Or take Ming's sometime boyfriend Honey, on the run from a murder rap and deeply dissatisfied with his brother Deuce's temporary leadership of the Little Park Gang. Honey clings to romantic and hopelessly dated notions of gang life (he has even read *War and Peace*, taking it as a generic swordplay novel), and his death is as inevitable and, arguably, as tragic as the collapse of an old code of honour in a Jean-Pierre Melville gangster movie.

The phenomenal thing about Yang's film is that it sustains this breadth of characterisation



Does your memory stray? Yang, right, directs Tan Zhigang (Ma), centre, and Zhang Zhen

and sociological colour across its entire *dramatis personae*. Not a single person, however peripheral, is denied his or her autonomy as a character or forced into a crude stereotype. Crucial to achieving this is not only Yang's respect and affection for his characters, but also his cool, measured visual style. The film is composed almost entirely in elegant wide-angle shots, most of them with a fixed frame, that leave the characters and audience room to breathe. There is no attempt to force the viewer into identification with any particular character, and neither is there any overt emotional manipulation. The visual compositions exactly match the plotting, in that both insist on seeing people and events in a wider context.

In this schema, the insecurities Xiao Si'r feels at home are mirrored precisely by his directionlessness at school and on the streets. At home, he is surrounded by women (his mother and three sisters) and lacks viable male role models. He reveres his father, only to see him and his faith in willpower humbled by political circumstances; he has no relationship to speak of with his elder brother Lao Er, who is the kind of academic achiever Xiao Si'r himself has so far failed to be. Mr Zhang's fundamental problem is that his personal decency in a deeply corrupt society has tended to isolate him and leave him impotent; in Chinese terms he has little or no *guanxi* (connections, the traditional Chinese network of friendship and mutual obligation that trumps all questions of merit and moral justice) and the only influential 'friendship' he can claim is ironically the one that lands him in political trouble.

Xiao Si'r tries to cement 'connections' of his own outside the family, but has no more luck than his father. He hangs out with junior members of the Little Park Gang and is happy to prevail on his sister to transcribe baffling English lyrics from American records for the gang's rock'n'roll band, but instinctively he's drawn to other loners like himself. The one who impresses him most is himself doomed to be shoved aside by history: Honey, the arch-romantic, Ma, the sharp kid who arrives in

school with a killer reputation and a highly privileged family background, proves a poor substitute, despite his access to guns, rifles and samurai swords. Xiao Si'r ultimately has to fend for himself in his attempt to build a relationship with Ming, and he finds the going tough. After all, he's only 14.

There's another frame of reference in which Yang's film shines as an heroic achievement: that of present-day production in Taiwan. The late 80s saw the virtual demise of the Taiwan film industry for a number of related reasons. First, the ending of martial law and consequent moves towards a more genuine democracy changed government attitudes to the propaganda value of movies, and the KMT-owned Central Motion Picture Corporation (long the largest single investor in film production and the strongest production/distribution/exhibition company) halted most of its activities; it is now more interested in funding an overseas Chinese director like Ang Lee (Li An) than in rebuilding the production system at home. Second, as Taipei surrendered to an increasingly reckless 'boom-town' mentality, scores of technicians left the film industry to take up more lucrative jobs elsewhere, diminishing the pool of available labour to vanishing point. Third, as the government relaxed its restrictions on contacts with Mainland China, financiers turned their attention to the possibilities of production there, often working with Mainland directors and writers. And fourth, the Taiwan public grew markedly more interested in Hong Kong movies than in domestic productions, and the Taiwan theatre circuits were happy to fill their screens with imported Hong Kong product. All of this conspired to slow Taiwanese production to a trickle.

Edward Yang responded to this decline in two ways: he established his own independent production company (Yang and his Gang, Film-makers) with a small group of like-minded friends, and he took up a teaching post in Stan Lai's drama department at the National Institute for the Arts. Both moves fed into the making of *A Brighter Summer Day*. The company set

Edward Yang

Born in Shanghai, 1947. Educated in Taiwan and the United States. Returned to Taiwan in 1981 to help with a friend's film, and stayed to become a leader of the 'New Cinema' movement.

Films

- 1981: *Fuping*** (Floating Leaf)
TV film in two parts
- 1981: *Zhiwang*** (Wishes)
Episode for the portmanteau feature **Guangyin De Gushi** (In Our Time)
- 1982: *Haitan De Yi Tian***
(That Day, On the Beach)
- 1985: *Qingmei Zhuma***
(Taipei Story)
- 1986: *Kongbuzheni***
(The Terroriser)
- 1991: *Guling He Shaonian***
Sha Ren Shijian
(A Brighter Summer Day)

about raising finance from a variety of hitherto untapped sources – including, eventually, the Japanese media giant MICO, an offshoot of the national broadcaster NHK. And the institute yielded an enormous pool of hitherto untapped talent: Yang found among his students dozens of the people who would become substantial collaborators on the making of the film. He notes that 75 per cent of the cast and more than 60 per cent of the crew had never worked on a film before, and the majority of these people (including co-writers Yan Hongya and Yang Shunqing, both of whom also act in the film) came from the institute. In short, Yang found and trained virtually all the personnel he needed to make the film with him.

Initiatives of this kind sound par for the independent film-making course until you remember that *A Brighter Summer Day* is not only mounted on an epic scale, but is also as fully achieved technically as anything out of any functioning studio system. Like his characters, though, Yang has to pay a certain price for his 'loner' status. Journalists visiting Taiwan to report on the film culture that has produced such talents as Yang and Hou Xiaoxian routinely come back with tales of bitching and back-biting from contemporaries; several prominent critics, writers and former collaborators are no longer on speaking terms with Yang. This syndrome is familiar enough in English film circles, and so perhaps it should be no surprise to find something similar in Taiwan. But happily, the predominantly youthful Taiwan audience seems to have appreciated *A Brighter Summer Day*, and the film was one of the most successful Taiwanese releases of its year. It is pleasant to report that Yang is vindicated as much by commercial success as by his own single-minded determination to get his vision on the screen.

Taipei, June 1992

A three-hour cut of *A Brighter Summer Day* (more tightly focused on Xiao Si'r and Ming than the integral version) won the Special Jury Prize at the Tokyo Film Festival last October. Since then, Yang has premiered the integral, four-hour version at the Hong Kong Film Festival, and is dividing his time between the institute, where he has co-conceived and directed a short play with his students (*Likely Consequence*, since recorded on video), preparations for his next feature, and travels overseas to promote *A Brighter Summer Day*. I catch him in his newly expanded office in Taipei, fresh from a visit to Seoul, and invite him to think back over the experience of making his *magnum opus*. This is a heavily edited version of what he has to say:

"Our reaction to the real-life murder back in 1960 was that it wasn't a big deal. There were fights all the time; the massacre of the 217 Gang in the film is based on an actual event. This murder seemed only a little more serious, though it did surprise everyone in the school – maybe because it wasn't very acceptable to go dating at the time, especially for younger kids. But I found that the incident stayed with me, and when I began researching it I found that most of my contemporaries remembered it

clearly too, whereas older people had forgotten it. And I began to realise that this was because all of us had sympathy with the kids involved. It could have happened to any one of us.

"I happened to know a number of people closely associated with the boy, and so I was able to research the facts of the case in some detail. But only for a very short period did I feel any need to be faithful to the facts; it soon became clear that it wasn't simply a question of what had happened to this specific boy and girl. Once I realised that, I was free to construct a fictional family for him, and to create the other characters as well. In fact, the other writers and I built up detailed psychological profiles and personal histories for virtually every character in the film. If someone asked me to make a 300-episode TV series about these people, I'd have the material to do it.

"In actuality, the boy was a member of the gang. But my philosophy of storytelling is that it's not interesting when a bad guy kills someone or when a good guy does something good; it gets interesting only when a good guy does bad things or vice versa. If Xiao Si'r belonged to a gang and killed someone, the entire focus would be blurred. The real-life girl had a background very similar to the one I gave Ming; that's why I had such sympathy for her. Just about all the native Taiwanese at the time still had close family ties, whereas the Mainlanders arrived detached from their old family structures. Ming's is an extreme case in point. For a girl that age to have no security, no obvious future...

"Gangs have always existed in Chinese society, as they do today. They exist because they fulfil a need; the Chinese have never been able to structure justice or law enforcement very well, and so there are always lots of holes in the system that need to be filled at local level. Sometimes I think that's a positive thing, but maybe I'm just romanticising it. China's history is full of strong central governments that failed to understand the immediate needs of local people, and communities always found ways to fill that vacuum. And so I think that secret societies and gangs are very characteristic of Chinese culture.

"American influence meant a lot to my generation, particularly to kids from Mainland families (like me), who found themselves detached from their roots. Learning to stand on our own feet, we found plenty to identify with in American individualism. At the time, of course, America had the world's dominant popular culture. Everywhere else was still in the process of rebuilding after the war. Also, you have to remember that no one in China ever thought that we'd win the war. The Chinese government never really had a plan to win. And when it was all suddenly over, thanks to the US, the American forces in Taiwan inevitably represented a kind of stability. The image of America as a model modern country grew strong. And America was always fresh. If you tuned into a rock'n'roll show on US Forces Radio, there'd be a new Number One every week. Whereas if you tuned to a Chinese music station, you'd hear the same thing over and over again.

"When people ask me what the murder has

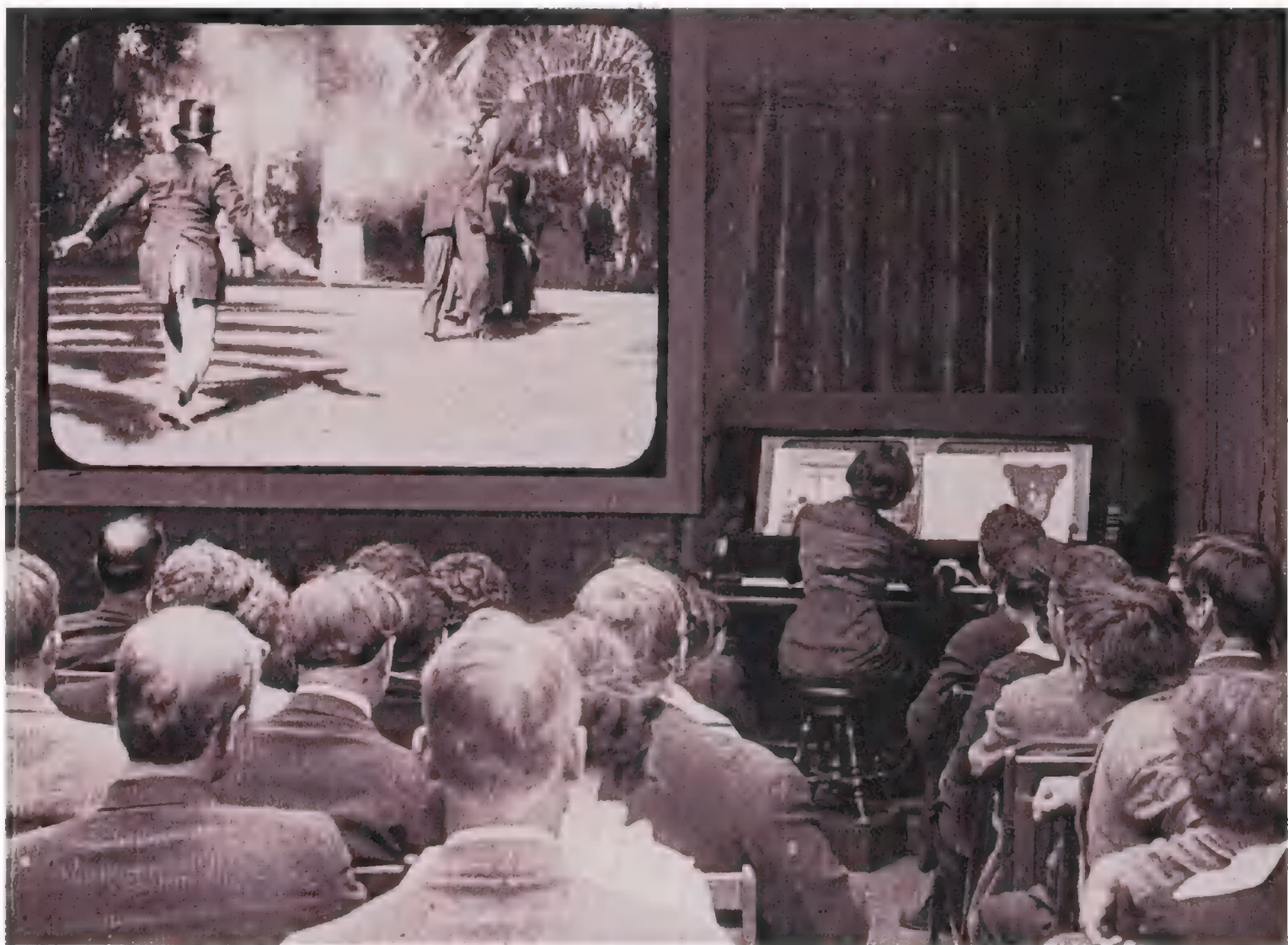
to do with the political climate, I always say: 'Go back and watch it again!' Actually, if you follow the main characters through the story, it's clear enough that the film's 'hidden' meaning has to do with conformity and non-conformity. Xiao Si'r and his father are both loners, and it was inevitable at the time that anyone with a conscience, anyone with honour, would become a loner. In Chinese history, or at least recent history, it has always been the educated class that suffered worst. It happened in Taiwan in the late 40s, when most of the Taiwanese elite was eliminated; it happened during the political purges of the martial law period; it happened in Tiananmen Square in 1989. In the film, Zhang gets into trouble because he relies on his supposed friendship with the official Wang, but if it hadn't been that it would have been something else. That's the tragic thing about being educated, decent and conscientious in times like those.

"In structuring the film, we looked for ironies and tried to set up connecting chains of action and reaction. For example, would-be usurper Sly might start something, and the consequences would have to relate to what happens to Ming. We tried to anchor it by tying characters to particular events, but each strand was designed to contribute to the scope of what we were building up. It took us some time to work it all out. Even though the full version runs four hours, I think it's very lean. My rough-cut was 20 minutes longer, and if I hadn't cut those 20 minutes out it would have been flabby.

"What's fundamentally wrong with the film business in Taiwan these days is the logic behind it. I can well understand the logic behind the Hong Kong film business: they have every reason to exist and function as they do. But the logic here is totally ridiculous. The government is now talking about providing subsidies or loans, but their motivation makes no sense and the regulations are full of loopholes. Anyhow, government intervention in film-making is clearly designed to benefit producers and their own Government Information Office more than creative people. The rules are basically intended to encourage a certain type of conformity. The underlying problem is that Taiwan's film industry has never had any real relationship with the mainstream economy. One of the things I'm trying to do is to go with the mainstream of the economy. I think that strategy gives the industry its only hope of a future.

"My next feature will be called *The Age of Independence*, and it's a comedy about modern young people in Taipei. After the collapse of the USSR, when all those small republics became independent, the issue of Taiwan's 'independence' from China came up again, partly stirred up by the Americans. I found the whole situation rather comical, not least because we've seen the consequences of 'independence' before in Latin America, Africa and elsewhere. Our story brings the issues down to a very human level, because everyone wants 'independence' in some sense. That's what I want to explore in the film."

The integral version of 'A Brighter Summer Day' opens at the ICA, London on 5 March



Film was never silent – music has always been a powerful, if undervalued, feature. By Ian Christie

SOUNDS AND SILENTS

● A mixture of anticipation and doubt hung in the air at the restoration premiere of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* at last year's London Film Festival. A famous title, a familiar yet still tantalisingly unknown director, and the latest of Kevin Brownlow and David Gill's miraculous attempts to bring back to life a forgotten silent for an audience more used to contemporary sound film all combined to raise expectations. During the interval, a leading French critic announced loudly that director Rex Ingram was undoubtedly overrated. But by the end, after Rudolph Valentino's death on the Western Front and the eerie pathos of the vast military graveyard finale, he and many other sceptics seemed to have changed their minds. *The Four Horsemen*, and Ingram's reputation, had been vindicated.

But would they have been, I wonder, without Carl Davis' music? For ever since the unex-

pected triumph of Brownlow and Gill's restoration of Abel Gance's *Napoléon*, for which Davis supplied an inspired score, the composer has worked closely with the duo, reinventing the role of the composer-arranger-conductor who began to play a vital part in film presentation from about 1914. By the time of *The Four Horsemen* in 1921, musical accompaniment was a standard cinematic expectation. Indeed, the large-scale scenes of Ingram's film – Valentino's first tango display, the German Army orgy in his father's château and, of course, the appearances of the allegorical 'four horsemen' – would have been unthinkable without strong musical support.

The first of these big scenes provides a classic opportunity for 'motivated' music, for Argentinian dance music was both exotic and fashionable in 1921. And only with an equivalent live accompaniment today is it possible to

appreciate what an important part this sequence played in making Valentino the erotic icon of his era. But just as the tango depends on accompaniment, so too, in different ways, do the orgy and the apocalyptic allegory. The former takes place in an atmosphere of licentiousness and violence, in which drunken songs, dancing, cross-dressing and rape all feature. The underlying erotic tension comes from an implied incest and patricide, since one of the German officers is a nephew of the family the war has rent asunder. Music here helps to create and sustain a sense of dangerous excess, adding discord and parody to the soldiers' raucous renderings of German songs which would still have had strong and unpleasant associations for a generation that had just experienced the trauma of the Great War.

As for the four horsemen, with their grotesque costumes and lighting based explic-



itly on Dürer engravings and other classical sources, it is doubtful that such extreme stylisation could have been accommodated in what is essentially a modern drama without musical framing and distancing. Their appearances would have been cued in the cinemas of the 20s by dramatic classical quotation or pastiche (as they are by Davis) to signal their disruption of the narrative. Perhaps more than many films of its time, *The Four Horsemen* relied on a musical underpinning and extension of its visual text. Deprived of this – as it has been for 70 years – it could only seem schematic and over-rhetorical.

We know by now, of course, that the silents were never silent, except inadvertently. Noël Burch has pointed out that the French term for this period – *cinéma muet* or 'mute cinema' – is more accurate in its focus on the absence not of sound, but of spoken language. We also know that there were other kinds of language pre-

sent in silent cinema, in addition to written intertitles. Eisenstein spoke of the "music of landscape" in his own and other directors' films of the 20s. And in her book *Music for Silent Films*, the music archivist and conductor Gillian Anderson quotes Jean-Paul Sartre's recollection of the strength of this primordial language: "My heroes weren't mute, since they knew how to make themselves understood. We communicated by means of music, it was the sound of their inner life... I would read the conversations, but I heard the hope and bitterness; I would perceive by ear the proud grief that remains silent... I felt I was a prophet without being able to foresee anything: even before the traitor betrayed, his crime entered me... How happy were those cowboys, those musketeers, those detectives; their future was there in that premonitory music."

Premonition, or in more mundane terms,

Noises off: a cinema pianist in the 1913 film 'Mabel's Dramatic Career', opposite; the German Army orgy in the restoration of Rex Ingram's 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse', above

cueing: preparing the audience for what's about to happen, underlining a joke, covering a change of scene or action. These functions had been performed by music in the theatre for generations. And when the projected images of the Magic Lantern began to simulate movement – as in Emile Reynaud's optical theatre of the early 1890s – they naturally needed musical support. Reynaud developed the *praxinoscope* – a series of hand-painted images mounted on a belt and back-projected on to a screen to create *pantomimes lumineuses*, such as a contemporary seaside comedy complete with Peeping Tom, and a *commedia dell'arte* Pierrot and Columbine. When I saw a recent recreation of Reynaud's show, presented by Dominique Painy at the Cinémathèque Française, what ►

◀ became obvious was that without this anticipating, nudging musical commentary on the action, the show would not have worked. Music was therefore already an integral part of the mode of presentation of an immediate precursor of moving pictures.

A well-documented example of the use of music in the very early history of film presentation is R.W. Paul's film of the victory of the Prince of Wales' horse Persimmon in the 1896 Derby. Paul was able to show a print of this early newsreel to a packed house at the Alhambra Theatre the evening after the race. The audience's "wild enthusiasm", according to a press report, "all but drowned the strains of 'God Bless the Prince of Wales', as played by the splendid orchestra." No question here of music being played to cover the sound of projection, as is still sometimes claimed by traditional histories. On the contrary, it had already started to play its future role of amplifying the emotion or associations latent in the film's images.

Within a few years it had become obvious that moving pictures were here to stay. Variety theatres were turning exclusively to film presentation and the pioneers of the new medium began to seek cultural prestige, initially through links with music and other established arts. Edison, for instance, produced a condensed version of Wagner's *Parsifal* in 1904, using phonographic sound combined with moving pictures and slides. It was not a commercial success, but it will be fascinating to see Gillian Anderson's new reconstruction for the Library of Congress.

The next decade saw persistent attempts by film producers to link their projects with established musical culture. In Russia, Alexander Drankov launched that country's first-ever dramatic production, the brigand tale *Stenka Razin* (1908), with an orchestral score commissioned from the then head of the Moscow Conservatoire, Ippolitov-Ivanov. A similar gesture followed in France, when the Film d'Art company persuaded Saint-Saëns to provide a full score for their debut film, *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise* (1908). Other instances are still being discovered, as film-programmers and musicologists converge on a terrain long ignored. Among recent finds are Mascagni's full-scale score for the 1914 Italian film *Rapsodia Satanica*, and in the following decade, Florent Schmitt's massive accompaniment to the 1925 Franco-Austrian production *Salammbô*. Other better-known examples from the 20s include Satie's witty Dada score for Picabia and Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924); Edmund Meisel's monumental Modernist scores for Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1926) and *October* (1928); and the young Shostakovich's passionate, ironic 'montage' music for Kozinisev and Trauberg's *New Babylon* (1929). But these, on the whole, were exceptions: by the 20s 'film music' had already acquired pejorative associations and become something composers might do for money, but rarely to advance their art or reputation – and preferably anonymously.

Libraries of 'standard' music were compiled and published, with titles like *Symphonic Color Classics* and *ABC Dramatic Set*. Theatre chains employed arrangers and copyists, and abbrevi-

ated cue sheets were sent out with all films, providing each cinema's musicians with a framework and starting point for either improvisation (less common, I suspect, than often supposed) or collaging standard material. Most important of all was the emergence of the 'unit' organ, which rapidly replaced the traditional church-style pipe organ and soon developed an amazing repertoire of extra-musical sound and even lighting effects. By the early 20s, a movie theatre's conductor – in a futuristic return to the baroque tradition of conducting from the keyboard – would be able to direct his orchestra from behind his versatile Wurlitzer or Kimball.

Routine demands for film accompaniment grew as rapidly as the rest of the industry. In the US, music played an important part in the shift from the small storefront nickelodeon cinemas of the early 1900s to the new movie palaces that appeared around 1910. As Douglas Gomery's research on American exhibition in *Shared Pleasures* has shown, it was the size of a new theatre's orchestra that proclaimed its status as a venue. For example, the Princess Theatre in Milwaukee opened in 1909 with the town's first theatre organ and a seven-piece orchestra; its success prompted further investment in the huge 1,500-seat Butterfly Theater, whose opening was heralded by proud announcements of a much larger number and range of musicians.

Nor was this confined to America. Gillian Anderson quotes an account of the presentation of Griffith's *Way Down East* at the Tower Cinema in Peckham, London, which conveys something of the showmanship expected by 1923: "This lightning Mr Marchbank – like Zeus – controlled [from the organ], evoking thunderous replies from the lower regions of the orchestra. There were also ice-breaking machines, waterfall, rain and wind effects... all manipulated in the right way, combined with the wonderful setting of the music... as a musical illustration of the drama on the screen." Here we find the reinvention of Victorian theatre's integral spectacle, which had employed stage machinery, 'effects' and music on a grand scale. Now, thanks to cinema, such spectacle could reach even the smallest towns, although with limited music and effects.

There can be no doubt that musical accompaniment for films attracted and supported many talented arranger-conductors, as well as an army of players. But the rapid growth and consequent automation of the industry also made inevitable a mediocre average standard and many instances of inept or even counter-productive accompaniment. Anderson quotes letters from the trade press which complained of vocal solos as "diaphragmatic writhings on da-me-ni-po" and "conductors [stopping] the orchestra anywhere in a number, like applying the emergency brakes at full speed", as well as

Bernard Herrmann must be about the nearest that Hollywood has come to supporting a 'real' composer

musicians who missed cues and those fazed in their rendition of Chopin by "extraneous sounds such as peanut cracking, ribald jeers and popping gum". Meanwhile, presentation in the metropolitan movie palaces took on a style and direction of its own, with overtures (usually classical) played before the film and regular spots for vocal and instrumental soloists. Some theatres even provided dancing and advertised a growing range of novelty events, mainly inspired by the potential of the electric organ as an embryonic control centre for the cinematic experience.

A vast new audience found itself listening to long stretches of instrumental music as an integral part of its main leisure pursuit, and this was to have profound consequences for twentieth-century culture as a whole. Thanks to cinema, soon joined by radio, there emerged a new, international conception of 'popular music'. And during this process, a crucial negotiation took place which began to define not only musical, but also filmic form.

For those who came from traditional music culture, like the Viennese doyen of New York cinema music directors, Hugo Reisenfeld, the key requirement was to 'subjugate' music to the visual drama of cinema: "The experienced scorer of motion pictures will know whether [a library piece] is too striking – or even too beautiful." But the negotiation was also already two-way, in that Reisenfeld and other music directors would often reshape films as they saw fit. Small-scale trimming of shots seems to have been a regular occurrence, as was dictating frequent changes in projection speed. On at least one occasion Reisenfeld took responsibility for completely recutting a film, apparently with success. Here in the 20s, well before the arrival of sound-on-film technology, we find the origins of the essentially reciprocal nature of modern film scoring and music editing.

Of course, the musical component of cinema was one of the first casualties of the talkie revolution. Film-makers and audiences alike were deprived, almost overnight, of what had seemed an essential part of the experience. At first, there were no rules about how to work in the new medium; Max Steiner, whose first decade in Hollywood included scoring *King Kong* and *Gone with the Wind*, recalled serious qualms being expressed about the acceptability of 'unmotivated' music – "where will people think it's coming from?" Such doubts were soon resolved, however, and a new idiom emerged which relied less on visible 'motivation' and leitmotifs than on expressive and atmospheric 'underscoring'.

This new idiom had been created within a decade by the remarkable band of musicians – more truly composers than the arrangers of the silent era – who settled in Hollywood. After Steiner came Erich Korngold, who had written operas in Europe in the 20s, before effectively creating Hollywood's high-romantic style in such late 30s scores for Warner Bros as *Captain Blood*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood* and *The Sea Hawk*. Then there was Miklos Rosza, whose long career would run from Korda's *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940) to Resnais' *Provence* (1977). And Alfred Newman, Franz Waxman, Dimitri



Tiomkin – all distinguished exponents of what came to be known, disparagingly, as ‘Hollywood soundtrack music’.

These composers and their post-war successors represented an immensely sophisticated trajectory of development, responding with equal fluency to new film-makers and new trends in popular music. Christopher Palmer, in his valuable study *The Composer in Hollywood*, singles out three later film composers – Alex North, Elmer Bernstein and Leonard Rosenman – as the generation who forged a new jazz-influenced idiom, though still within the ‘symphonic’ tradition, in films such as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Walk on the Wild Side* and *East of Eden*. But of all these, perhaps Bernard Herrmann is the only one of his generation to command wide respect as the nearest Hollywood has come to supporting a ‘real’ composer. True, Herrmann continued to work in ‘serious’ forms alongside his busy careers in radio and cinema, with two operas and a string of concert pieces to his name. But the key, of course, was that he was to collaborate with directors of the stature of Welles, Hitchcock, Nicholas Ray, Truffaut, and, on what would be his final score, *Taxi Driver*, with Scorsese. Ultimately it is only through such creative interactions that music for cinema can escape the aesthetic limbo into which years of ‘subordination’ have cast it.

Running parallel with this vast continent of musical achievement is a narrow vein of ‘classical crossover’ that has also received less than its fair share of critical exploration. Prokofiev, with his two Eisenstein scores, *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible*, must head the list, followed by William Walton, Leonard Bernstein (*On the Waterfront*) and Hans Werner Henze (*Muriel*). Virgil Thomson, Aaron Copland and Benjamin Britten have all been applauded for their music for documentaries (less vulgar, in many eyes, than fiction), while in France Darius Milhaud’s and Arthur Honegger’s occasional film work is recognised. Yet in Britain, the film scores

of such avant-garde composers as Elisabeth Lutyens (*Dr Terror’s House of Horrors* and *The Earth Dies Screaming* among many) and Humphrey Searle (including *The Baby and the Battleship*) have never been properly acknowledged.

The case of Alfred Schnittke, perhaps the most widely respected living ‘art’ composer, offers a valuable opportunity to challenge the cultural snobbery that has so long hung over cinema-concert hall relations. Schnittke was a prolific composer for Soviet films of all kinds – popular action movies, as well as dissident films by Klimov and animation by Norstein – before his concert work was performed or known abroad. Many of his concert works ‘quote’ from earlier film scores and use collage, pastiche and other techniques that can only be called cinematic. Schnittke has recently been drawn back to cinema by a commission to write a new score for a silent film revival.

Indeed, the last ten years have seen a steady trickle of commissions for contemporary art composers to write new scores for 20s films. In Britain alone, Benedict Mason has written scores for Clair’s *An Italian Straw Hat*, Kuleshov’s *Extraordinary Adventures of Mr West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* and, recently, three Chaplin shorts. Two years ago Mike Westbrook wrote a chamber score to accompany Dupont’s *Moulin Rouge*, and a new score by Jonathan Lloyd for the silent version of Hitchcock’s *Blackmail* will be premiered this month in both Paris and London. Similar developments have been happening in France and Germany, often linked with the revival of original silent-period scores such as those of Meisel, Maurice Jaubert, Hanns Eisler, Schmitt and others.

What opportunities does this offer composers – apart from a chance for their work to be played more widely than most modern concert music? Lloyd, already highly regarded for his symphonies and music-theatre pieces, describes his score for *Blackmail* as “a cinematic ballet”. Studying the film, he was struck, echo-

Orchestral manoeuvres in the dark: Kevin Brownlow and David Gill’s restoration of Abel Gance’s ‘Napoléon’, with full musical accompaniment scored by Carl Davis

ing Sartre, by how “the silent world inhabited by these characters on the screen serves to heighten their powers of physical expression, magnifying nuances that might pass unnoticed were they to be given voices.” In other words, the hypervisual world of mute cinema allows a composer to give audible voice to the film’s language – or even to draw attention to what the film leaves unsaid. As Lloyd notes: “Not the least of the charms of *Blackmail* is that it has no ending – nothing is resolved. Alice White’s future exists in one’s imagination, as does the music which accompanies it.”

Robert Ziegler, conductor for the premieres of Lloyd’s score, has included suites by both Hermann and Nino Rota in his concerts with the Matrix Ensemble. He speaks of Lloyd’s “sophisticated use of musical ‘found objects’,” and, especially in the British Museum chase, “a web of simple recurrent rhythms, such as one would find in popular music, that generate tremendous tension.” For contemporary composers who feel confined in the art-music ghetto, silent cinema may once again prove an exciting catalyst for experiment and communication with a wider audience.

Thanks to the valuable work of conductors Gillian Anderson and Alan Fearon (responsible for the Meisel restorations), we now know better how the silents originally sounded. And thanks to Carl Davis, Kevin Brownlow and David Gill, there is once again a popular, widely accessible idiom for the presentation of ‘live silents’. Dolby? Who needs it!

The British premiere of Jonathan Lloyd’s new score for *Blackmail* is on 18 March, 7.45pm; ‘Jazz and the Silver Screen’ (*L’Assassinat du Duc de Guise*, ‘La P’tite Lili’ and ‘Entr’acte’) is on 21 March at 3pm; ‘Moulin Rouge’ is on 21 March at 7.45pm – all at Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. For details of other UK venues call Nicky Webb Associates on 081 679 9303

MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

'Sight and Sound' invited two people to reflect on the serial killer film, 'Candyman'. First, Bernard Rose recalls the process by which he became the film's director. And second, Colin MacCabe enquires on which critical terms such a film can be addressed.

There is one question that is always, without fail, asked of directors by every journalist in every country in the world: "What attracted you to this material?" As you feel your mouth moving on autopilot, repeating some well-rehearsed sound bite about the true human and cultural significance of your movie, you are fighting to suppress the desire to grab your interrogator's cheap tape-recorder and scream: "Because it seemed like a good idea at the time!" This is not because the question is stupid or irrelevant; in fact, it is probably fundamental. It's just that the honest answer is impossible to give – like trying to rationalise, after the event, what made you fall in love. Maybe, then, it would be easier to recount the events that led to the production of the film.

September 1989

I am sitting in the restaurant at Pinewood having lunch with Kiefer Sutherland. It is the last day of shooting on 'Chicago Joe'. We are both glad it is nearly over. There is much gallows humour of an unrepeatable nature. I realise it is the first time I have seen him smile in weeks. Clive Barker passes our table; he seems to know Kiefer and so he joins us. He is embroiled in his own troubled production, 'Nightbreed'. We swap horror stories. Clive tells me how much he liked 'Paperhouse' and I decide that he is an extremely intelligent and charming man.

March 1990

I am holed up with my wife, Alexandra, in a place off Hollywood Boulevard called the

Magic Hotel. Much later, after viewing 'Barton Fink', I know the Coens must have stayed here too. I am looking for a job, any job. My bank balance is bleeding red ink. There is one thing in my favour; nobody in Los Angeles reads the British press. There is as yet no negative word on 'Chicago Joe'. I occupy my day by reading screenplays, a somewhat futile exercise as the ones I like I have no shot at and the others have to be read to be believed. Still, it creates the illusion that there is hope. A studio executive and friend sends me an adaptation of a Clive Barker short story. She tells me that the writer who did the adaptation thinks he is going to direct it, but the studio has other ideas. Am I interested? I read it and think it is terrible.

April 1990

My English agent, Jenne Casarotto, and my American agent at CAA, Rosalie Swedlin, invite me to lunch. They both look concerned. The subject of the Barker adaptation arises. I say it stinks. They tell me I'm in no position to be choosy. Rosalie suggests that I read the original Barker story, saying it is far superior in the screenplay. I half-heartedly agree to take a look at it. However, it is clear that time is running out; I can only afford two more weeks at the Magic.

The short story is a revelation: Barker's prose is magical, creating the subtlest of chilling moods. But the impact is purely literary. The crux of the tale is that it occurs in total darkness, like Poe's 'Tell Tale Heart', and is therefore quintessentially uncinematic. It gets hotter in the shabby hotel room; I plough on

through the pile of scripts. Alexandra, alarmed at our impending bankruptcy, reads the other short stories in the Barker anthology. She casually mentions that 'The Forbidden' might make a decent movie, but that it should be called *Candyman*. I call Rosalie to pass on the Barker project and so as not to seem difficult, mention that I think 'The Forbidden' would make a much better movie. I have not actually read it when I say this.

The next morning I am lying in bed staring at the peeling wallpaper when the telephone rings. It is Clive Barker. He tells me he is thrilled that I want to adapt 'The Forbidden' and gives me permission to pitch the idea around town provided he is attached as executive producer. I put down the phone, grab the book and start to read. I am about half way through when the 'phone rings again. It is Adam Krentzman, Barker's agent at CAA. He tells me that Propaganda Films are trying to make an overall deal with Clive. Would I go in and pitch 'The Forbidden' to them this afternoon? I say yes, why not. I finish the story. I love it, thank God. I go in to see Steve Golin at Propaganda, who asks me what the story is about. I tell him: a mythical creature with a hook for a hand who disembowels people. He buys it on the spot.

July 1991

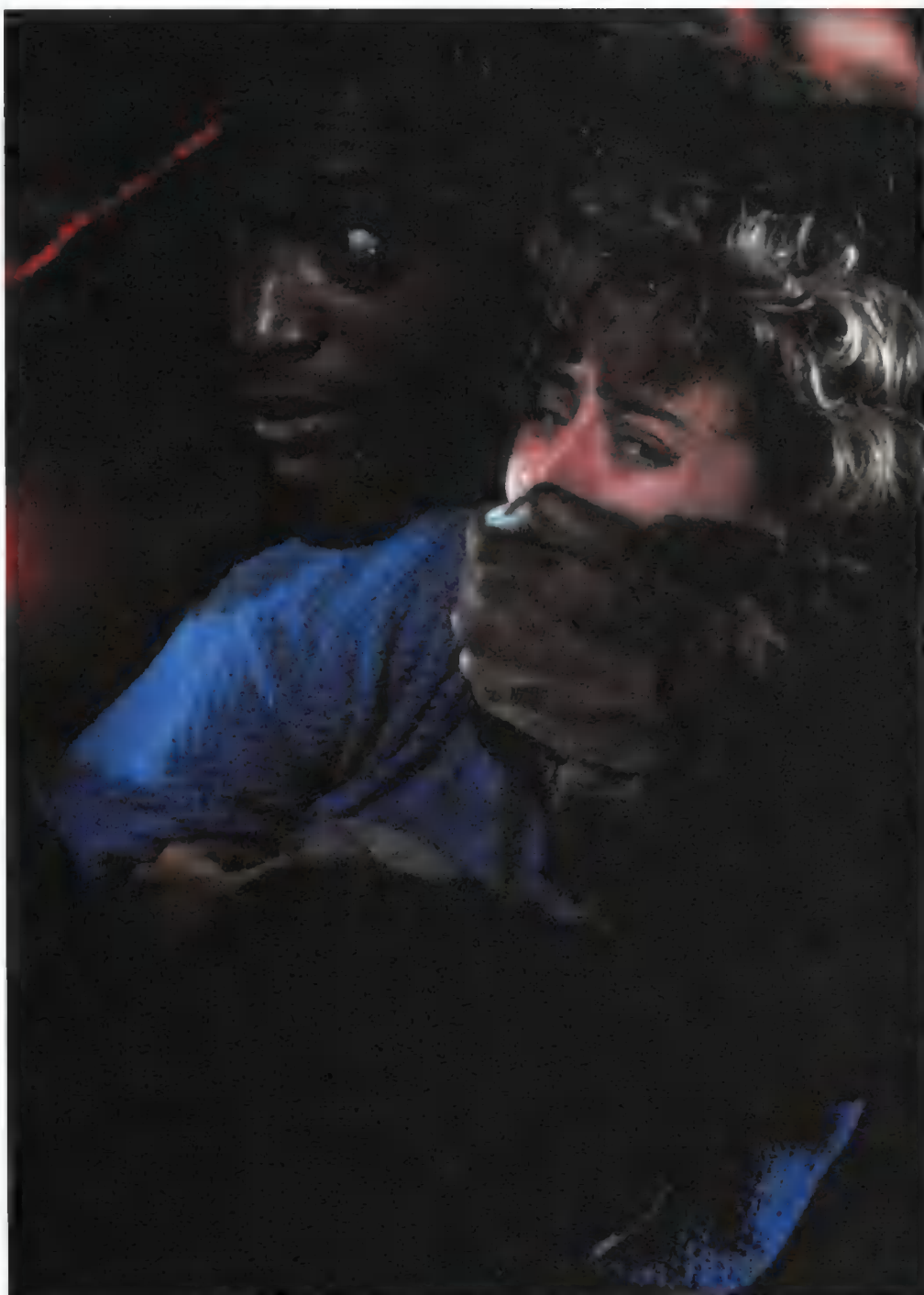
After many rewrites and much research, Clive and Steve are happy with the screenplay, which is now called 'Candyman'. We send it out to the studios. Six weeks later the film is in production.

It is one of the less palatable truths of life that success is usually good for people. When the young British director Bernard Rose left London two years ago, much of his manic energy was devoted to extended diatribes against the British film establishment – critics and executives alike. One could have become seriously worried (from several different points of view) as his over-abundant imagination thought up grosser and grosser punishments for those who had failed to recognise the Rose genius. And these punishments were to be crowned by public castigation when Bernard returned in triumph from America.

Return in triumph he now has. His first Hollywood feature, *Candyman*, picked up some awards at Avoriaz in mid-January before its European release, having already grossed \$25,416,067 (to 25 January 1993) at the American box office. Rose is now in development with a Mel Gibson project as well as the inevitable *Candyman 2*. I had rather hoped, if only for the purposes of this article, that some of the destructive venom would still be at work. But success has turned Bernard LA mellow, and no amount of provocation could raise the slightest outrage at previous slights. "Let's just say these people no longer show on my radar," says the director, whose gossip is now of lunch with Mel Gibson and what Mike Ovitz said.

Rose burst out of the National Film School to become the first whizz kid of rock video – he made two of the classics of the genre: the over-the-top (and banned) visual accompaniment to Frankie Goes to Hollywood's 'Relax' and the wonderful three-minute black-and-white drama which accompanied Bronski Beat's 'Smalltown Boy'. He moved on to a slick BBC computer drama *Smart Money* until Working Title (for whom he had made most of his videos) got the money together for *Paperhouse* (1988) – a haunting tale of a young girl whose drawings take on a life of their own.

All the money for *Paperhouse* came from the US, and the American mother and upbeat ending imposed by the backers ensured that *Paperhouse* was deeply flawed. An avid British filmgoer might be forgiven for never having heard of the movie, which was ignored by British critics and died in the cinemas. But



Marginal creatures and urban legends: Tony Todd as Candyman, whose origin is traced to a racial murder

Paperhouse did find two interesting audiences. One was Hollywood execs and agents – undoubtedly impressed by the horror sequences of the movie, in which the child finds herself alone and under attack in the house she has drawn, Ovitz and CAA signed Rose on to the Hollywood hopefuls list. The film was also a success as a video, and redeemed itself financially through that audience.

This was lucky for Rose, because after a *jeu d'esprit* at the BBC called *Body Contact* (1987) he walked into a disaster called *Chicago Joe and the Showgirl* (1989). This script, based on a true story of murder in wartime London, had obsessed Rose for years, and after much pushing it finally went into production as a medium-budget movie (over £3,000,000) with two serious stars (Kiefer Sutherland and Emily Lloyd). When it came out, the British critics had a field day. Much of the criticism was justified – the story simply wasn't interesting enough to sustain a whole movie – but there were elements such as the extraordinary soundtrack, the recreation of wartime London and the crosscut interrogations at the end that would have told anybody with eyes to see or ears to hear that here was a substantial directing talent at work.

So Rose, at barely 30, found himself with his career as a British director effectively over and fled to Los Angeles. It may not have seemed so at the time, but his luck was in. He was commissioned by Working Title's sister company Propaganda to work on a Clive Barker short story. Horror seemed perfect for the young director, as it generically sanctions the violence that so obsesses Rose and which sat uncomfortably in the naturalistic British settings of his first two features. Even luckier was that Propaganda commissioned him to write the script under the mistaken impression (as anecdote has it) that he had written *Paperhouse* (in fact, the *Paperhouse* script was by Matthew Jacobs). So barely 30, with a career as a British director behind him, Rose embarked on a new future as a Hollywood writer/director.

Candyman tells the story of Helen Lyle, an anthropology graduate student in Chicago who is working on urban legends. She stumbles across the rumour of Candyman, a being who slices his victims to pieces with a hook, and ►



Revenge and tragedy: Candyman in the streets of the night

◀ becomes convinced that he exists. Her professor husband and senior colleagues are dismissive as, after initial interest, are the police. And when the Candyman begins to demonstrate his reality, Helen herself is suspected of his crimes. The finale provides both sacrifice, as Helen substitutes herself for a baby whom Candyman has stolen, and revenge, as she makes male infidelity an unattractive option in ways that *Fatal Attraction* only began to suggest.

It is tempting to produce a reading of *Candyman* in relation to the growing academic interest in slasher movies, witnessed most recently by Carol Clover's *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*. Clover's book argues that the slasher movie offers an important moment in popular ideology as women turn from victims to agents. Clover concentrates on the figure of the Final Girl – the Jamie Lee Curtis figure who, after all her friends have been disembowelled, turns and destroys the murderer. In a postscript, Clover adds that this figure of the Final Girl has now migrated into the mainstream in such films as *The Silence of the Lambs*. If one were to follow this reading, then *Candyman* marks the reverse migration, as a sexually mature and competent woman stalks the slasher from the start to an ending which fuses her with him.

The film, however, self-consciously rejects the question of sexuality as posed by the slasher movie in favour of more socially ambiguous terrain. The movie's opening scenes reveal a sexually provocative young girl meeting the bloody death one might expect in a slasher. But this is in turn revealed to be a student story – one of the many legends that Helen Lyle is collecting. The real interest of the movie starts when a black cleaner (who has overheard the story) tells Helen there really is a Candyman – in the projects that surround the university. The movie lumps together the slasher tradition and academic discourse as examples of attempts to evade the reality of contemporary America, which is race.

If one compares the first draft of the script, written in Britain, with the final shooting script (rewritten in America), what is astonishing is not only the addition of this opening set-up, but the new and continuous emphasis on race. Most significant of the changes is that

Candyman's origin is traced to a racial murder which is revenge for an act of sexual transgression and miscegenation. From this perspective, Helen Lyle's story is the story of the effort to repeat the transgression in order, once again, to give a child life. When asked about the changes and the question of race, Rose simply responds by saying that this was inevitable once he had been to the projects in Chicago. He also points out that the film was particularly popular with black audiences.

There is a powerful aesthetic which argues that art must come out of intense personal experience and profound specific knowledge. From this point of view, *Candyman* represents a cultural homogeneity which is Hollywood mass entertainment at its worst. A British director with little direct knowledge of the city in which he is filming mines racial fantasies for pure commerce. In addition, one might argue that while it may be plausible to read *Candyman* as a complicated Utopian fantasy of multicultural reproduction, it is also possible to read it as vicarious male desire for a black man who will finally give an uppity white girl what she's been asking for (on being offered this very plausible interpretation, Rose said he would sue).

To this familiar cultural lament could be added another favourite tune, whereby Rose is yet one more example of British talent lost to Hollywood commerce. I want, however, to advance here a different argument. If one looks at Rose's British movies, it is clear that they are hamstrung by not being local enough: both *Paperhouse* and *Chicago Joe* come to grief because their very general themes are never properly articulated through their local setting. So Hollywood has been a liberation for Rose because it allows him to work on his chosen terrain – the articulation of fundamental emotions within generalised settings.

Since its early days, Hollywood has seen its audience in global terms. If the US remains the most important box office in terms both of market share and of less quantifiable forms of success, Hollywood's aspiration has never been to the local but to the universal, as so many of the names and logos of the companies and studios attest. But how are we to analyse or discuss this universal? If we are well equipped to celebrate the local and the specific, we have for a long time now fought shy of the universal because on inspection it always turns out to be historically specific itself. But the problems posed by Rose's movie are not even as simple as that. The movie does not propose itself as ahistorical, yet its version of history is of a generalised time in which white middle-class suburbs abut black ghettos. It is in this generalised time that its dilemmas of race, sex and violence play themselves out.

The problem of how to evaluate critically popular Hollywood cinema is not a new one. But in a world where its dominance grows ever more striking, it is perhaps more urgent. And it seems more than ever important to distinguish between those films which simply repeat stale identities and pleasures, and those which promise new knowledge. The most explicit message of *Candyman*, and the one the director insists on, is that there are more things in

heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our academic philosophies.

I must here confess to a very personal stake in this movie – Bernard Rose lived in my basement for five years, and there were few evenings that did not end with a discussion (that's the politest word that springs to mind) of the analysis of film. Not only is my name taken in vain in a barely audible side conversation in the movie ("Have you read the latest MacCabe?" – "Yes, it's absolute rubbish"), but in many ways the academic setting provides the film's fundamental argument: that all attempts at interpretation are simply evasions of realities too powerful to articulate.

If one were to take this seriously then a great deal of the effort of the last 20 years of film studies might seem wasted. The endless appeals to 'subversion' and 'transgression' would be merely attempts to reduce texts to logics which if they were adequate to the texts, would in that very fact be damning. At this point, it becomes tempting to wonder if it is not possible to make a new appeal to a notion of complexity which would not be promoted as a value in itself but in terms of the force of the contradictions it is able to harness. It is all too easy to agree with a Robin Wood, who might argue that one should read *Candyman* as a paean of protest against the heterosexual couple and bourgeois domesticity. The problem is that the protest is also in the name of that heterosexual domesticity. In these Hollywood films, to reveal a cherished ideal as a cheat and a fraud in no way diminishes, and is in no way meant to diminish, its force.

It is at this point that formal questions merge with those of content. If we are to value *Candyman*, it is not simply in the complexity of its relation to its own generic antecedents and its opening of these on to the question of race. Fundamental are those moments which punctuate the film where there is literally nothing in the image – the flashes which first accompany Helen's photography of the graffiti in the projects and then accompany her increasing states of mental confusion. These, together with Philip Glass' magnificent score, provide a kind of zero point within the film which means that all interpretations – not least the fundamental one as to whether the Candyman exists – are suspended. If these appeals to complexity and negativity have a very modernist ring, it may be that even in a post-modern age, we cannot escape questions of art and value.

It is in this context that one can understand *Candyman* as breaking the confines of its genre to confront fundamental questions of representation and narration. To understand and communicate one's experience – this is Helen Lyle's dilemma. The zero moments of image and sound indicate how at the centre of any representation or communication there is a vertiginous emptiness – moments of solitude or madness which resist symbolisation but which are also the space where new thoughts and realities emerge. As the procession from the ghetto winds its way to Helen's grave, Rose's film gestures towards such a novel reality.

'Candyman' opens on 19 March and is reviewed on page 38 of this issue

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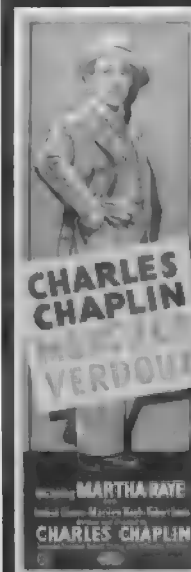
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PRIVATE LIVES OF RUSSIAN CINEMA

A sensitive policeman, a baby abandoned in a cabbage patch and a narcoleptic teacher: these are among the subjects explored in the new post-Soviet cinema. By Julian Graffy

● "No," said Alice. "I don't even know what a Mock Turtle is." (Lewis Carroll)
"It lies all the time, that Nevsky Prospect..." (Nikolai Gogol)

"What the Soviet Union was I knew, but as for Russia, we've never been introduced," an old peasant woman tells Iosif Pasternak when asked in his new documentary, *Le Fantôme Efre-mov*, what her country's newly restored name means to her. But what kind of a country was it that had two names, The Soviet Union and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – neither of which contained the slightest hint of geography, any reference to a place you could find on a map? In retrospect, these names that weren't a place seem only too appropriate for a country that continued to exist for 70 years through an act of linguistic and ideological funambulism, the triumph of will over actuality, of state mythology over lived experience.

During the period of the hegemony of Socialist Realism, with its 'positive heroes' and 'elevating' ('revolutionary romantic') depiction of life as it ought to be, Soviet art came close to achieving the 'paradisiacal' monophony deplored by the writer Evgeny Zamiatin in a series of admonitory essays written shortly after the October Revolution. The Khrushchev 'thaw' inaugurated, in cinema as in the other arts, a troubled attempt to reclaim polyphony, the primacy of individual experiences hitherto marginalised by an art which centred human aspirations on constructing factories, over-fulfilling five-year plans or defending the motherland, banishing the complexity of personal emotion from a world which excoriated 'psychologising' as a throwback to the disdained pre-Revolutionary epoch.

It is now fashionable to dismiss the Brezhnev years as a 'period of stagnation', but the investigation of individual experience gained in strength during those years, a process repre-

sented in literature through the Moscow novels of Yuri Trifonov and in cinema through a succession of powerful subversions of official dogma by the director Vadim Abdrashitov and his regular scriptwriter Aleksandr Mindadze. But if personal imperatives were back on the artistic agenda, the chasm between the private and public for the individual Soviet citizen was as enormous as ever. Veteran director Yuly Raizman actually called his 1982 film about the uneasy adjustment of a Moscow bureaucrat to premature retirement *Private Life*.

For Soviet women, of course, the balancing act was even more demanding, and their attempts to stay on the tightrope are addressed in a series of important films of the period. In Kira Muratova's first film *Short Meetings* (1967), Valentina Ivanovna (played by Muratova herself) manages to cope with the town's water-supply problems, but almost loses her nomadic husband. Sofiko, in Lana Gogoberidze's *Several Interviews on Personal Matters* (1978), is a successful journalist, but her husband's resentment at her long working hours makes him turn to other women. Elizaveta, in Gleb Panfilov's *I Want to Speak* (1975), is a national champion riflewoman and model of upward mobility, Soviet style, but her obsessive attention to public business – she actually becomes the chairman of her town's Soviet – and her naive faith in party dogma lead to the death of her son. Only in Vladimir Menshov's fairy tale *Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears* (1979) does a chance meeting on a train lead our heroine belatedly to a successful marriage of career and true love.

The Fifth Congress of the Filmmakers' Union, in May 1986, ushered in a greater freedom of expression, whether about the cankered Stalinist past or the rackety, chaotic present – a present that could now include the disaffected youth of Valery Ogorodnikov's 1987 *Burglar* or Sergei Solovlev's 1988 *ASSA*, as well as the hard-currency prostitutes of Petr Todor-

ovsky's 1989 *Intergirl*. Documentarists filed their reports on the experiences of drug addicts and Aids victims. The private life that was being retrieved was confused, often damaged, sometimes ugly.

The key film text of the period is Muratova's *The Asthenic Syndrome* (1989). The film opens with the doctor heroine Natalia moaning hysterically at the funeral of her husband, and Muratova's camera then trails her back to the nightmarish concrete of her apartment block through city streets where she abuses and is abused by strangers. In its concentration on a woman's experience and its black-and-white photography, the film is reminiscent of Muratova's first two films, *Short Meetings* and *Long Farewells* (1971), both shelved for their failure to offer positive models of behaviour. But suddenly, 40 minutes into *The Asthenic Syndrome*, black and white gives way to colour, and we are revealed to have been watching a film, and one not at all to the liking of its cinematic audience, who make determinedly for the exits, resisting the lure of a discussion with the leading actress about the triumphs of Soviet authorial cinema, and muttering that they did not come to the cinema to be depressed, they can get enough of that at home.

As the second part of *The Asthenic Syndrome* ►



At a slight angle to the universe: Kolia, the naive dreamer of Dostai's 'Cloud Heaven', opposite; the body revealed, in Muratova's 'The Asthenic Syndrome', above

◀ reveals, they are only too right. If Natalia's despair is motivated by bereavement, and if life finally reclaims her in her acceptance of the kindness of a young woman who cleans her coat, the Moscow of part two of the film is a place of shocking, universal trauma, the debilitating condition of the film's title expressing itself by turn in the 'My Own Private Moscow' narcolepsy of the teacher hero Nikolai and the bouts of frenetic activity of the other characters. If the Muscovites of *The Asthenic Syndrome* are revealed to have private lives, these seem to be lives without moral or even linguistic rudders. Muratova had her characters repeat their lines even in *Short Meetings*, but here the device is formalised as, for example, a pair of schoolgirls prate their lesson in Russian and English, exposing the fatuousness of what they are taught. By 1989, if Muratova's diagnosis is correct, the gap between official behaviour and private desires has reduced an entire country to neurotic semi-idiocy.

The accuracy of *The Asthenic Syndrome* was acknowledged by its achieving the distinction, rare in the *perestroika* period, of being briefly shelved. The reasons for this banning are themselves revealing: objections were made to a scene at the end of the film in which a well-dressed woman on the underground gives vent to a stream of obscene invective. Language was always a crucial weapon in the armoury of a regime that called its main newspaper *Pravda* ('The Truth'). Late Soviet bureaucracy, it appeared, was not at all discountenanced by a public discourse whose distance from reality was apparent even to schoolchildren, but could not tolerate a speech which echoed the experience of the Moscow streets.

A further reason for the shelving of *The Asthenic Syndrome* is alleged to have been its naked bodies. The reclamation of private life by Russian cinema has included a reclamation of the body, a process that has taken a variety of forms. The burgeoning video salons have done good business with some of the *causes célèbres* of western cinematic nudity, and with the inevitable glut of Soviet simulacra. But if the bodies of Hollywood seem dressed even in their nudity, clothed in the burnished beauty of their flawless skins, Muratova shows us nakedness. The young men and women of *The Asthenic Syndrome* stare statically at camera, as if to remind us of what bodies, ordinary bodies so long elided from Soviet cinema, actually look like. Muratova's latest film, *The Sensitive Policeman*, contains two long sequences in which the naked policeman and his wife get up, wash and dress for work. Nakedness, not nudity, is also what gives savage power to a scene at the end of Vitaly Kanevsky's *Don't Move, Die and Rise Again!* (1989), in which a mother flails around a settlement after the death of her daughter, directly echoing the ending of Dovzhenko's *Earth*, where a naked woman, devastated by the loss of her lover, sways frenziedly around a peasant hut (a scene that was cut from the Soviet version of the film for many years).

The body is restored to us too in a remarkable recent film by Aleksandr Sokurov, *The Second Circle* (1990). Death is, of course, one of the commonplaces of cinema, but dead bodies are

not. Sokurov's originality, as the critic Mikhail Yampolsky has pointed out, is not to show the death of his hero's father, but to devote his entire film to the bereft son's dealings with the body – washing it, registering it, moving it and preparing it for burial – and through this to provide a corrosive snapshot of late-Soviet alienation.

These and other films of the Gorbachev years managed to chronicle, with sometimes devastating passion, a society terminally estranged from itself. In the last two years, however, some film-makers have felt able to move even further in the direction of an almost clinical analysis, putting their human exhibits under a compassionate but unflinching microscope, codifying their assumptions, behaviour and language, exposing their disorientation, battered hopes and fragile yearnings.

Cabbage patch and cliché

"See the Policeman standing on point duty
Watching everything, committing
Everything to memory and see his bride,
The Ambulance speeding up all in white..."
(Dmitry Prigov)

Tolia, the hero of Muratova's *The Sensitive Policeman*, finds an abandoned baby in a cabbage patch and takes it back to the police station, where a middle-aged female doctor examines it before it is temporarily deposited in a children's home. Later, Tolia and his wife Klava conceive the idea of adopting the child, but the home's managers outmanoeuvre them and little Natasha is given to the doctor.

Muratova first worked on this screenplay during the Brezhnev period, when she was banned from directing, but was not allowed to develop it because "such things do not happen in this country." Years later, after completing *The Asthenic Syndrome*, overwhelmed by "a long period of despair, because it seemed to me that there was nowhere to go and nothing to say, that everything had been said," she returned to her founding and, one can surmise, made of it a rather different film.

The film's very title should alert us to Muratova's analytical intent, for if the policeman (strong, brave, alert, protective) is a key component of official Soviet mythology, he is also, as Klava complains, the butt of subversive, mocking popular anecdote. But Muratova's Tolia is not the policeman of official myth – he is scarcely seen at work, his superiors are never mentioned, even his colleague is only glimpsed taking his children to school. This is a policeman observed in private life – and there is something deeply wrong about private life in *The Sensitive Policeman*. As much as in *The Asthenic Syndrome*, it seems drained of meaning, a meaning Tolia searches for in his compulsive disquisitions about the horrifying chance that he and Klava might never have met.

All the characters in the film, but particularly the men, seem naive, childish, doll-like – this is a world in which ideas, not children, are conceived, and children are adopted or found in cabbage patches. The film, made by the Primodessa company as the USSR was coming to an end, includes set-piece scenes in symbolic

Soviet institutions – police station, children's home, courtroom – but the denizens of these places are all either corrupt or mad and seem to be performing rather than experiencing their lives. It also audaciously contains its own heretically privatised 'Odessa Steps' sequence, in which Tolia asks Klava whether she has remembered to eat, and expresses his pity for the suffering of walls and grass. Muratova's eye for Soviet reality is breathtakingly acute, down to the large red Moscow Olympics towel with which Tolia and Klava dry themselves after their morning ablutions, but her boldest formal strokes are in the areas of character and language, where the devices invented for *The Asthenic Syndrome* are overt and pervasive.

The Sensitive Policeman is a film full of doublings, including a succession of pairs of characters – two nurses; two disabled workmen, one missing the left hand, the other the right; even Tolia and Klava themselves, who dress and tie their shoelaces in unison. This doubling is echoed in actions, in repetitions of the same bodily tics, in entire sequences, but above all in language. Scarcely a line in *The Sensitive Policeman* is not repeated: twice, three times, four times. Whole conversations, of which a lengthy scene at the beginning of people complaining about the nocturnal barking of dogs is but one bravura example, are threaded out of reiterated clichés, while some characters can express themselves only through varying the intonation and word order of a single sentence.

By making overt the clichés of Soviet lexis, ranging from official jargon to street squabbles (an approach allied to the Russian Conceptualist poets' recent project of studying the linguistic world of daily life by incanting its platitudes), Muratova offers a seering analysis of late-Soviet mentalities. The bold formalism of *The Sensitive Policeman* displays an entire world drifting, in Cavafy's words, "at a slight angle to the universe".

Dream of elsewhere

Nikolai Dostal's *Cloud Heaven* (shown at last year's London Film Festival) could be read as a companion piece to *The Sensitive Policeman*. Its hero, the naive dreamer Kolia, failing to engage any of the other inhabitants of his provincial small town block of flats in conversation one boring Sunday, announces in frustration – for something to say – that he is leaving, inventing a mysterious invitation out east from an old schoolmate. All his lugubrious acquaintances, from his best friend Fedia to a pair of hitherto contemptuous crones, plunge avidly into his fiction, his dream of elsewhere, arranging a jolly farewell party at which they studiously ignore him, concentrating their passion on the pies and vodka.

Dostal's characters, like Muratova's, have only a tentative hold on reality, and he is equally alert to the drabness of Soviet language – Kolia's conversational gambits are endlessly repeated reports that though the radio forecasts rain, it has nevertheless "turned out nice again". Like Muratova's Tolia, Kolia uses a fantasy narrative to attempt to bring his life to life.

Iosif Pasternak's new documentary *Le Fantôme Efremov*, made for French television, is

In 1972 Andrei Tarkovsky told Leonid Kozlov about his favourite films. Tom Lasica recently talked with the critic

Tarkovsky's choice

I remember that wet, grey day in April 1972 very well. We were sitting by an open window and talking about various things when the conversation turned to Otar Ioseliani's film 'Once Upon a Time There Lived a Singing Blackbird'.

"It's a good film," said Tarkovsky and immediately added, drawing out his words, "though it's, well, a little bit too... too..." He fell silent with the sentence half finished, his eyes screwed up. After a moment of intense reflection, he hit his fingernails and continued decisively, "No! No, it's a very good film!"

It was at this point that I asked Tarkovsky if he would compile a list of his favourite ten or so films. He took my proposition very seriously and for a few minutes sat deep in thought with his head bent over a piece of paper. Then he began to write down a list of directors' names – Buñuel, Mizoguchi, Bergman, Bresson, Kurosawa, Antonioni, Vigo. One more, Dreyer, followed after a pause. Next he made a list of films and put them carefully in a numbered order. The list, it seemed, was ready, but suddenly and unexpectedly Tarkovsky added another title – 'City Lights'.

This is the final version of the list he made: 1. 'Le Journal d'un curé de campagne'; 2. 'Winter Light';

3. 'Nazarin'; 4. 'Wild Strawberries'; 5. 'City Lights'; 6. 'Ugetsu Monogatari'; 7. 'Seven Samurai'; 8. 'Persona'; 9. 'Mouchette'; 10. 'Woman of the Dunes' (Teshigahara).

After the list had been typed and signed "16.4.72 A. Tarkovsky", we returned to our conversation, during which he quite naturally changed the subject and started with his gentle sense of humour to talk about something of no importance. Looking back at the list today, 20 years on, it strikes me how clearly his choices characterise Tarkovsky the artist.

Like the numerous top tens submitted by directors to various magazines over the years, Tarkovsky's list is highly revealing. Its main feature is the severity of its choice – with the exception of 'City Lights', it does not contain a single silent film or any from the 30s or 40s.

The reason for this is simply that Tarkovsky saw the cinema's first 50 years as a prelude to what he considered to be real film-making. And though he rated highly both Dovzhenko and Barmat, the complete absence of Soviet films from his list is perhaps indicative of the fact that he saw real film-making as something that went on elsewhere. When considering this point, one also needs to bear in mind the polemical attitude that Tarkovsky became imbued with through his experience as a filmmaker in the Soviet Union.

For Tarkovsky, the question lay not in how beautiful a film-maker's art can be, but in the heights that Art can reach. The director of 'Andrei Rublev' strove for the most profound spiritual tension

and extreme existential self-exposure in all his work and was ready to reject anything and everything that was incompatible with this end. His list, which includes three films by Bergman, undoubtedly reflects his taste both as a director and as a viewer – but the latter is subordinate to the former.

As the way he began to compile his top ten shows, this is not only a list of Tarkovsky's favourite films, but equally one of his favourite directors. Tarkovsky's and Bergman's "elective affinity" was noted long ago, well before 'Sacrifice'. But Bresson's film does not come top of the list by chance: Tarkovsky considered him to be a supreme creative individual.

"Robert Bresson is for me an example of a real and genuine film-maker... He obeys only certain higher, objective laws of Art... Bresson is the only person who remained himself and survived all the pressures brought to fame."

It would seem to me that the unexpected appearance of 'City Lights' in the list can be explained similarly. What mattered most to Tarkovsky was not so much the film's cinematographic achievements or any philosophical points it made, but rather the comprehensive nature of Chaplin's self-realisation as a director. "Chaplin is the only person to have gone down into cinematic history without any shadow of a doubt. The films he left behind can never grow old."

The essence of Tarkovsky's top ten films shows nothing less than his own manifesto for authorial film-making. Tarkovsky's list was printed in 'Kinovedcheskie zapiski' 14, 1992

and banned from Soviet screens. Yuri Tsivian's *Istoricheskaya retrospektiva kino. Kinematograf v Rossii 1896-1930* (The Historical Reception of the Cinema. The Cinematograph in Russia 1896-1930, Riga, 1991), due to appear in English in 1994, is a work of fundamental importance. Combining keen intellectual curiosity with exemplary scholarship, Tsivian traces the evolution not just of film language, but of the receptive capacities and tastes of the filmgoing audience, bringing the period of Russian and Soviet silent film into focus as never before.

The most famous Soviet film fan was, of course, Joseph Stalin. *Kremlevskii tsektor. Stalin smotrit kino* (The Kremlin Censor. Stalin Watches the Cinema, Moscow, 1992) by Grigory Mariamov, who worked at the time at the State Cinema organisation Goskino and helped the cinema minister Ivan Bolshakov select new offerings for the leader, is chaotically organised, but shows just how directly and compulsively Stalin intervened in all aspects of "the most important art". Stalin, it transpires, read and corrected scripts, down to orthographical errors and misplaced commas; suggested themes; changed endings; changed titles; changed the winners of Stalin prizes; and even told Eisenstein to shorten Ivan the Terrible's beard. He planned Mikhail Chiaureli's *The Fall of Berlin* as part of a bombastic series intended to demonstrate his greatness as a military leader, to be entitled *Stalin's Ten Blows* (only three of them were made). He saw *The Great Waltz* and demanded from Bolshakov a series of films on Russian composers such as Glinka and Rimsky-Korsakov. He hated Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* and the only copy was securely locked away. Mariamov's book gives detailed accounts of Stalin's dealings with Soviet film-makers, from his removal of Trotsky from Eisenstein and Aleksandrov's *October* in 1927 until his death a quarter of a century later.

A farcical business

At the beginning of three earlier decades, the 20s, the 30s and the 50s, a range of political and economic, cultural and ideological pressures brought Russian cinema to its knees. Now it is again in crisis, a crisis that is but a microcosm of the desperate state of a country buffeted by a series of shocks, psychological as much as political and economic. But Russian cinema has shown great staying power, and the breadth of its appeal should not be underestimated.

In 1913 Tsar Nicholas II dismissed the new art form: "I consider that cinematography is an empty matter, which no one needs... Only an abnormal person could place this farcical business on the level of art." Yet according to Peter Kenez's new study *Cinema and Soviet Society 1917-1953*, Nicholas was at the same time fascinated by the new technology, commissioning myriad royal newsreels and bestowing the title 'court cinematographer' on at least five of his subjects. The talented and brave people working in the industry today are needed as never before to help their audiences articulate an understanding of the disjointed times they are living through. One can only hope that reports of impending cataclysm will turn out to have been exaggerated.

structured round asking the inhabitants of the town of Efremov what Russia (their newly restored country) means to them. Pasternak chose Efremov because of its situation in the centre of Russia, near the estates of Tolstoy and Turgenev (Chekhov called it the muddiest town he'd ever visited), and because in 1917 the writer Konstantin Paustovsky went there to report on how the Russian backwoods had responded to the Revolution. A man explains that the latest revolution, the defeat of the August 1991 putsch, was "a Moscow event", unnoticed here. Another, younger man insists that Efremov itself is a phantom, a place (like the worlds of Tolia and Kolja) that has too little energy to exist outside the collective hallucination of its inhabitants. At the end of the film *Liudochka*, a young kindergarten teacher who might be Chekhov's Irina, dreams (like Kolja) of escaping, not to Moscow, but to the regional centre, Tula, where the cultured citizens complete entire sentences without swearing.

Painful autopsy

The Russian press now carries regular cries of alarm about the cinematic production crisis, the distribution crisis, the attendance crisis (a survey of Muscovites taken last year revealed that 65 per cent of them had been to the cinema less than three times in the last six months, a catastrophic figure by Russian standards). And yet films of high quality are still being made, their makers participating in the

autopsy on the Soviet experiment that is a key strand of contemporary intellectual life.

The cinematic inquest is also proceeding in other arenas. The Cinema Museum in Moscow has embarked on an ambitious retrospective of Russian and German films from the 20s to the 80s, which will continue intermittently for a year. Despite financial turmoil in the publishing world, important new film journals continue to appear. Typical of the work published in the stylish *Seans* (St Petersburg, six issues since 1990) is a reclamation by critic Oleg Kovalov of Andrei Moskvina, the cinematographer who gave the 20s FEKS (Factory of the Eccentric Actor) films of Kozintsev and Trauberg (*The Devil's Wheel*, *The Overcoat*, *SVD* and *New Babylon*) their haunted, neurotic surface. *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* (Cinematic Notes, Moscow, 14 issues since 1988) has had special issues on such subjects as Eisenstein, FEKS and 70s cinema, and devotes its latest issue to Tarkovsky. The doyen of Russian film magazines, *Iskusstvo kino* (Art of the Cinema, a journal which has lately taken to paying *Sight and Sound* the compliment of reprinting its recent articles), has also had some excellent special issues, notably on women in cinema and on Jewish cinema.

Somehow, too, pioneering books continue to appear, however niggardly the print run. Levon Grigorian's *Tri tsveta odnoi strasti* (Three Colours of a Single Passion, Moscow, 1991) is the first book-length study in Russian of the posthumously lionised Sergei Paradzhanov, who was impris-

Two writers reflect on Audrey Hepburn, actress and icon of sophisticated existentialist Europe

GAMINE AGAINST THE GRAIN



RODAL

AUDREY HEPBURN
BORN 4 MAY 1929 DIED 20 JANUARY 1993

BY LIZZIE FRANCKE

“You have all the qualities of Peter Pan,” sings an adoring Fred Astaire as he serenades Audrey Hepburn and her “sunny, funny face” in Stanley Donen’s 1956 musical satire on mannequin fashion and voguish Left Bank ideas. The jejune and elfin Hepburn would have made a nimble, sagacious, almost Tinkerbellish Peter – just take a look at those quizzical eyebrows. Indeed in the 60s, George Cukor planned to film the story of the eternal boy with Hepburn in the title role. It was a project he first developed in the 30s for his other Hepburn – and Audrey was not unlike her poised surnamesake. “Class” was the word Billy Wilder used, but clipped vowels and principal-boy potential apart, these two shared a warmth and intelligence that by Audrey’s generation, in a Hollywood increasingly caught up in Mom fantasies, was far from fashionable. In the 50s Hepburn (A.), along with the equally gamine Jean Simmons (and later Jean Seberg) were actors who went against the grain.

Hepburn (full name Edda Hepburn van Heemstra) was born in Brussels in 1929. Her mother was a Dutch baroness, her father an English banker. The silver spoon was soon wrenched out of her mouth, however, when in 1939 she and her mother found themselves trapped in Nazi-occupied Arnhem. Her experiences during this unhappy period were reportedly behind her decision in later years to involve herself in UNICEF.

With the war over, Hepburn, who had trained as a dancer, went to England, where she found chorus work in various West End musicals. It was her stylish performance in the popular review *Sauce Piquant* that brought her to the attention of film director/producer Mario Zampi, who gave her a couple of lines in the 1951 comedy *Laughter in Paradise*. After a flurry of equally meagre roles in British films made in the same year – her most prominent but still fleeting spot is in the final minutes of *The Lavender Hill Mob* – Hepburn was to have a significant encounter in a Monte Carlo hotel lobby. It could have been a scene from *Funny Face*, as Colette strolled by, spotted the young ingenue and recommended her for the title role in the stage adaptation of her novel *Gigi*. Hepburn found herself Broadway-bound, where she won riotous acclaim as the virginal, wide-eyed child-woman who is trained to become a courtesan.

The role of *Gigi* set a pattern, for in later years Hepburn could be cosmopolitan, but never knowing in a worldly way. This is particularly true of her first major film role as Princess Ann in William Wyler’s sweetly romantic comedy *Roman Holiday* (1953). Here Hepburn plays a sprite-like royal who plays hooky for a day in Rome. The city is like a box of wonders that she prizes open, constantly delighted by all it has to reveal (Tivoli stone lions especially). But most importantly she opens her heart to Gregory Peck’s reporter, only to relinquish him when solemn duty calls.

If *Roman Holiday* was a Cinderella story in reverse, Hepburn would find herself cast in a

more standard version of the fairy tale in Billy Wilder’s *Sabrina Fair* (1954), in which she plays a chauffeur’s daughter courted by her father’s employer’s sons. Donen’s *Funny Face* and Cukor’s *My Fair Lady* (1964) also saw transformations of the rags-to-riches kind, whether from bookshop assistant to magazine model, or from smudged-faced flower seller to a “right proper lady”. *My Fair Lady* had Hepburn being more wily and impish than ever before. Though she could not sing (she was dubbed in the Cukor film and passed quite engagingly in the Donen), she was a mistress of comedy who was willing to be quite silly – though even her memorable send-up of a beatnik dance in *Funny Face* had an elegance to it. She could have traded surnames with another of her screen personae: Holly Golightly, the free-spirited call-girl heroine of Blake Edward’s *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1961).

Hepburn is perhaps best remembered for her comedies and musicals – in which she was always smartly dressed, whether by Cecil Beaton or Givenchy – but she proved to be an actress of considerable range. Her Natasha in King Vidor’s *War and Peace* (1956) is thought to be definitive. And in Fred Zinnemann’s *The Nun’s Story* (1958) she brought an unquestionable gravitas to the role of the young woman who takes the veil and later realises that she hasn’t an absolute calling. In the same year she was cast as a young American Indian woman adopted and raised by Lillian Gish in John Huston’s underrated *The Unforgiven* (1959) – interestingly, like Jean Simmons who played the Indian Kanchi in *Black Narcissus*, her gamine appeal could be translated into exotic otherness. But perhaps one of her finest and most sensitive performances was opposite Shirley MacLaine in William Wyler’s second stab at the then controversial Lillian Hellman play (which dealt with, but could never mention lesbianism), *The Children’s Hour* (1961).

By the mid-60s, Hepburn found that her Peter Pan wings had been clipped, despite the fact that she was only in her 30s (Fred Astaire was 58 when he played opposite her in *Funny Face*). But her last two roles of the decade served to emphasise her capacities as a performer. She single-handedly carried Donen’s *Two for the Road* (1966), a study of marital break-up over a span of 12 years that saw Hepburn metamorphose



Sophisticated lady: Hepburn, left, and above with Humphrey Bogart in *Sabrina Fair*, which prompted a fashion revolution

from child bride to wearied wife. Likewise as a tenacious blind woman she was the central force in Terence Young’s thriller *Wait until Dark* (1967).

In the 1975 edition of his biographical dictionary, David Thomson suggested that “since Hepburn brought the idea of innocence to her films, rather than the prospect of character, it is likely that past youth, she will not make any movies.” But coming out of semi-retirement in 1976, Hepburn’s august and characterful performance in Richard Lester’s autumnal *Robin and Marian* proved it was just a matter of being rewarded with the right roles – a problem actresses of a certain age know only too well. Meanwhile, this once-upon-a-time Peter Pan turned her attentions to UNICEF, for whom she was a tireless ambassador. But surrounded by children, she could never quite discard the mantle of innocence. It thus seems strangely fitting that for her final role she should end up being cast by that other Peter Pan – Steven Spielberg – in *Always* (1989). As the chicest angel in heaven with the sunniest, funniest face, Hepburn finally proved she was eternal.

BY ELIZABETH WILSON

The 80s retrospectively transformed the 50s of our imagination into a world of lost innocence, a world before drug abuse, a world in which it was safe to walk the streets. Films and television advertisements catered to this longing for lost youth with scenarios of blue jeans, country dancing and swinging ponytails (on girls, not boys), forgetting that the downside of this innocence was a stifling conservatism. But feminists are less likely to forget. They have reconstructed the 50s as the worst of times, when women were buried alive in their domestic interiors, and forced to resemble Marilyn Monroe or Liz Taylor.

Audrey Hepburn reminds us that it was never that simple. Her startling – and startled – beauty may have been the embodiment of 50s innocence, but also anticipated a different and freer kind of 60s innocence. At the same time her films hinted at a continuing oppression. The waif is free, yet needs to be rescued. For me, growing up in those years, she offered hope from the moment I saw her portrait in *Vogue*. Her chrysanthemum fringe, huge eyes and poloneck sweater instantly created a different style. The cliff-like bosoms, heavy pouts and concrete curls of the beauties of the period were a million miles away from anything I could ever hope or want to look like; the hour-glass fashions simply didn’t suit me. Of course I would never look like Audrey Hepburn either, but at least she demonstrated that there was, after all, another way to be.

She was described as ‘gamine’, but for me her charm lay not in the androgyny of simple hair and a boyish figure, but in a style that seemed the embodiment of sophisticated, existentialist Europe as opposed to the overripe artificiality of Hollywood. She might look like Bambi, but her casual style signalled student, not starlet; she proved that a woman could have brains and still be attractive. Years later, I was fascinated to read in the autobiogra- ►



Putting on a style: Audrey Hepburn as a beatnik, with friends, in Stanley Donen's 'Funny Face'

◀ phy of Barbara Hulanicki, creator of that wonderful 60s dress emporium, Biba, how Audrey Hepburn had been her inspiration. Hulanicki wrote feelingly of her teenage despair at a time when even clothes intended for the young were based on *haute couture* fashions that had been designed for the middle aged. Then, at art college: "Sabrina Fair made a huge impact on us all... everyone walked around in black sloppy sweaters, suede low-cut flatties and gold hoop earrings... Audrey Hepburn and Givenchy were made for each other. His little black dress with shoestring straps in *Sabrina Fair* must have been imprinted on many teenagers' minds forever."

Audrey Hepburn and Leslie Caron, who had both trained as ballet dancers, created and popularised a look that disrupted class-bound British society without succumbing to American stereotypes. They made wit and intelligence seem sexy. Today, I can appreciate the wit and irony of the Hollywood sex icons: Doris Day in *Calamity Jane*, Kim Novak in *Vertigo* and the Marilyn Monroe comedies don't simply send up, but implicitly question the Hollywood sexual ideal. At the time, I was too young to see that, and found the sex and femininity in films such as *Niagara*, *From Here to Eternity* and *A Place in the Sun* humourless and negative.

Of all of Hepburn's films, *Funny Face* best demonstrates the way the industry could knowingly laugh at its own assumptions. Though the film satirises the world of fashion magazines rather than that of the film industry, the two held similar notions of glamour. Hepburn as 'Funny Face' wears glasses and a black sweater and works in a Greenwich Village bookshop where she dreams of meeting the great Parisian philosopher, Emile Flostre. When the editor of an upmarket fashion magazine (a satire on Diana Vreeland, who in her time edited both *Harper's Bazaar* and *American Vogue*) gatecrashes the shop for a fashion shoot, her photographer (based on Richard Avedon) 'discovers' Hepburn, who is whisked off to Paris as a model. There, all three get involved in a wonderful parody of existentialist café society,

before Hepburn finds happiness as a model (and wife) with her Svengali.

The ending is conventional, but this has less impact than the ridicule heaped on the absurdities of the fashion scene. And although Hepburn does finally metamorphose into a fashion icon, the integrity of her earlier, intellectual self is endorsed, even if it is betrayed by the philosopher, who turns out to be a vulgar seducer. In *Funny Face*, Hepburn represents an innocence that is idealistic, but not stupid. In *Roman Holiday*, too, her youthfulness has dignity, and though she returns in the end to her life as a princess, we are allowed to believe that her carefree interlude on the back of a moped has at some level more worth than the hypocrisies of pomp and spectacle.

Both films speak what Barbara Hulanicki felt: this was the beginning of the youth rebellion, which happened not in the 60s, but in the 50s. Hepburn's films, in however lighthearted a way, protest against the stuffiness and cultural conservatism of their times – not just in Eisenhower's America or Tory Britain, but in Adenauer's Germany, Christian Democrat Italy and France's post-war republic.

Truman Capote's short novel *Breakfast at Tiffany's* was an attempt to create in Hollywood a Sally Bowles who lives in post-war Manhattan rather than the Weimar Republic. But Holly Golightly was a gamine, a kooky character without the whiff of anarchy and madness which Christopher Isherwood brought to Bowles. The film version is so glossy that the viewer gets little sense of a genuine Greenwich Village bohemia, and Hepburn is too innocent to bring out the squalor and humiliation of Holly's life. Hepburn is incapable of being damaged or shop-soiled, yet there is a poignancy in her films that comes from the metamorphosis that invariably lies in wait: her passionate innocence is encased in *haute couture*, her beauty gets embalmed in happy endings that solve nothing. (*Roman Holiday* is the exception, and to that extent more truthful.)

Hollywood stars such as Joan Crawford in the 30s were famous for their clothes, created

by California-based designers such as Adrian. (Although Chanel had been invited to Hollywood briefly, her designs were considered too understated for the requirements of film.) A whole industry had been set up to market copies of the outfits of the stars, with department-store displays, special fashion magazines and even paper patterns. By the 50s this had waned. For one thing, Paris couturiers had begun to mass-market their designs, and there were in any case more sources of fashion inspiration. Also, European cinema was challenging the dominance of Hollywood. A number of films explored Left Bank style (Chabrol's *Les Cousins*, for example) and Jeanne Moreau would soon create a fashion for a new, more offbeat look with *Jules et Jim*.

Since Audrey Hepburn was the forerunner of this trend, the extent to which her films are dominated by *haute couture* may seem surprising – and unrealistic, as when a chauffeur's daughter appears in a staggeringly glamorous evening dress, or a Greenwich Village waif visits Sing Sing dressed in the expensive chic of a little black dress, huge black hat and trailing beige scarf. And it is certainly the case that although she was celebrated as a girl in black drainpipe trousers and a Left Bank sweater, the clothes in many of her films were in fact designed by Givenchy, and her relationship with the designer was close, both artistically and in life (this made Hepburn even more exotic as an international star – to be dressed by a Paris designer was unusual). Yet despite his incontrovertible status as a *haute couture* designer, Givenchy, following his master Balenciaga, was the important forerunner of the minimalist designs of the 60s. And Hepburn's films played a crucial role in changing sensibilities, so that by 1960 the 50s stars seemed coarse and blowy.

Nevertheless, the Hepburn/Givenchy style does send out contradictory messages. The Hepburn character of her contemporary films is both free and bound. To be a wilful, trouser-clad student type can only ever be a phase. In the end, she must 'grow up' and wear grown-up clothes.

In 1958, an article in *Twentieth Century* wondered at the way young women dressed like their boyfriends, in jeans and duffle coats, yet appeared uninterested in feminism or careers. Even when they rebelled, young women seemed more likely to be rebelling for artistic than for feminist reasons. Both *Funny Face* and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* allude to the choice faced by the hero between artistic integrity and commercial success. This occludes that other choice made by so many 50s women: between work and marriage.

Today, Audrey Hepburn has become the ghost of all those hopeful students, dancers, artists – a talented generation of young women, most of whom abandoned careers for the American suburban dream. We remember her like Henry James' heroine in *The Portrait of a Lady*, poised forever at her moment of momentous choice. Whatever the unexplored consequences, her beauty triumphs. She soars like a bird, forever on the wing, a wild creature who cannot be imprisoned.

The Outsider

I first saw *The Day of the Locust*, as well as many other films which have fed my dreams, at the Cineluxe, Mbabano, Swaziland – an African kingdom the size of Wales with a population of one million, and one of the last red dots of Empire on the continent to gain independence at the end of the 60s. Mbabano had one bioscope called the Queensway, adjacent to Coronation Park, which of course had a copy of that picture of the Queen in evening outfit that seemed to hang in every public place. The Queensway put on a pantomime at Christmas, but otherwise featured two flicks a week, usually between six and twelve months beyond their Western sell-by dates. No Bergman or Kurosawa or Powell and Pressburger here – Film Festival week was a repeat binge of blockbuster technicolour musicals endlessly starring Gordon MacRae, Howard Keel and Ann Blyth.

The Queensway burnt down in 1970 and two enterprising doctors opened the Swazi Drive-In – a treacherous health hazard with mosquitoes in the sub-tropical summers and John Carpenter mists and drizzle in winter, not to mention the notorious 1,000-foot mountain pass that spiralled down to the valley where the screen was sited. A sign at the summit proclaimed "Death Toll 93", the number freshly painted beside the skull and cross-bones. I saw *The Godfather* films through a car windscreen and heard Marlon mumbling through the crackling mono speaker clipped to the half-open window.

The burnt-out Queensway was renovated by a certain Mannie Malagamson, who revamped it as the Cineluxe, the 'luxe' part justified by the floor-to-wall-to-ceiling-and-down-again blue carpeting. Mannie squeezed his voluptuous wife Yvonne, who prided herself on "looking exactly like Liz Taylor", into the tiny box office, and for us, humouring her fantastic delusion ensured unlawful entry to Certificate 18s and the occasional free pass. The midnight double bill for a full three years was *A Clockwork Orange* and *Last Tango in Paris*, exhibited not for their Bertolucci/Kubrick pedigrees, but for the porn-seekers from across the South African border, who rushed in for cinematic corruption.

The Swazi audience for regular showings at regular prices was Roman in its vocalised appreciation of Hollywood's best. And that for me is a much-missed part of movie-going in Britain, where participation is confined to the rustle of sweet wrappings and pop-corn farts. In the Cineluxe, violence and garrottings elicited cheers and applause, while Bob kissing Babs in *The Way We Were* was rewarded with hysterical laughter at a level that any stand-up comic would covet. In fact, all kissings occasioned such eruptions.

The only available magazine was David Castell's *Films Illustrated*, which informed the early 70s for me, before the Kung-Fu, sci-fi and disaster cycle took its toll. *Midnight Cowboy*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Women in Love*, *Roma* and *Amarcord*, *Day for Night*, *Lenny*, *Cabaret*, *The Godfather* movies, *Scarecrow*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *Last Tango*, *Mean Streets*, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, *Chinatown*, *Nashville*

Richard E. Grant remembers the Cineluxe in Swaziland, the fantasies stoked by his viewings, and how he still feels like William Atherton in 'The Day of the Locust'

and *The Day of the Locust* – the films that fixated me and fed my fantasies all seemed connected. The Schlesinger/Waldo Salt team on *Midnight Cowboy* was reunited for *The Day of the Locust*. I had seen *Locust* star Donald Sutherland – at last a long-faced leading actor who hailed from a tiny Canadian town and didn't look like Robert Redford – in *Mash* directed by Altman. *Maybe, maybe me too?* *The Day of the Locust* is fed all too potently by the idea of 'getting there', and I found myself instantly plugged in. Karen Black, just seen in Altman's *Nashville*, and with a screen credit on *Gatsby*, scripted by Coppola... out of these and so many other cross-references a dream was dreamt that I too might one day work with Altman, Coppola and Scorsese. Hence the internal combustion I experienced when those adolescent loose connections short-circuited last month as at the premiere of *Dracula* I walked the red carpet into Grauman's Chinese theatre – the setting for the apocalyptic finale of *The Day of the Locust*.

The credit sequence of *The Day of the Locust* opens with the ubiquitous sprinklers that keep the desert that is Los Angeles green. This is followed by an introduction to the protagonists: William Atherton the outsider looking in, with whom I willingly identified; Karen Black as cross-eyed wannabee Faye Greener, the walking composite of her film heroines, her gestures and poses borrowed from the screen, setting a standard for self-obsession by which I have since judged all real-life pretenders. Then there was Donald Sutherland transformed as Homer into a lobotomised giant, tormented by miniature child-star Jackie Haley as Adore. And it all happened *there* – where you can buy *Variety* in any gas station and get



Nights of dreaming: 'The Day of the Locust'

the latest news on the box-office grosses from the mechanic.

The vulpine Karen Black, Billy Barty's dwarf-with-a-deal, Geraldine Page hysterically blasting forth "Come to Jezus!" at the revival scam, Burgess Meredith's shrinking vaudevillean, and a graphic cock fight that pre-stages the finale – all as extreme and exciting as you could wish for, or as I wished for. A perverse prism refracting broken lives. Conrad Hall's pitch-black screen that splits as the vast studio door rumbles open to reveal the studio innards – a Pandora's box image that hovers still in my consciousness. And then the hubris of fame shatters in the expressionist premiere at which the dream is destroyed by its dreamers.

And now I've seen them looking at me, those same disappointed faces that still sit staring out from the concrete bus benches along Sunset Boulevard. They contributed to my guilt-edged dream as I entered Grauman's theatre – my recognition of the glare that challenges: "What the fuck have you got that I ain't?". And of course, I still feel the Atherton outsider among those inside. Even though Carrie Fisher offered this sharp piece of advice: "You're no longer a tourist, you're one of the attractions."



Of giants and things: Donald Sutherland, the melancholy giant in John Schlesinger's 'The Day of the Locust'

Reality principles

Sheila Hayman

Virtual Worlds: A Journey in Hype and Hyperreality
Benjamin Woolley, Blackwell,
£16.95, 274pp

In a recent issue of *Whole Earth Review*, editor Howard Rheingold wrote, "I hope this will be the last word we publish on VR". Ironically, it was Rheingold's book *Virtual Reality*, published a couple of years ago, which initiated much of the hype around the subject, with its panting promotion of teledildonics (virtual sex – the peepshow for the twenty-first century). With any luck, VR may well turn out to be an event that expires before it materialises, assassinated by premature publicity.

The insight of Benjamin Woolley's much better book is that the ideas that surround VR are far more interesting than the experience itself – reinventing the world from point zero throws up a galaxy of philosophical, moral and political questions. With impressive erudition, *Virtual Worlds* expounds on these ideas – from the theory of relativity to Artificial Intelligence (AI), flight simulators to Schrodinger's cat, Leonardo's *Last Supper* to Nissan's retro-cars, those fake memories of an imagined technological past.

The idea of virtuality itself is fun to play with – try breaking down the virtual walls round two people talking at a party, or eating virtual power breakfasts in Hollywood. There are virtual communities of hackers and bulletin-board users, defined not by geography but by their common interests, and virtual companies, with no offices or physical locus, only a viral money machine spinning an electronic web across the globe: it's happening already, everywhere. Digitisation – the conversion of any sound, image, text or figure into interchangeable blips – makes such things possible. A Renoir can be digitised and a perfect copy sent across the world, zoomed into, exploded into poster colours, with little nuggets of information embedded in the folds of its garments.

Thanks to digitisation, photographers are panicking as they see their work dissolve into somebody else's version, and with it their copyright fees. Think the camera never lies? Thanks to digitisation, these days the camera lies like a rug. But that Renoir remains a digital image on a flat computer screen – it has no smell, texture, opacity, frame or setting. Virtual entities will always be different from natural ones – the question is, why do they exist? What drives the technological imperative that impels Intel to double the capacity of its memory chips every 18 months? Why should Marvin Minsky and the Media Lab put so much money and effort into synthesising a human brain, when generating a real one is so quick, cheap and enjoyable? Why wantonly swap the capacities we have for something that – in its current state – resembles bouncing off the walls of a Mondrian in boxing gloves and a wetsuit?

AI, to which *Virtual Worlds* devotes considerable space, seems particularly difficult to justify. Until AI can explain music or bacon sandwiches, it hasn't worked. But to make something able to feel and think like

a person would require it to have all the senses, faculties and experience of a person – to be a person, like Borges' map, fitting perfectly over the territory it depicts. The book, which cites this analogy, shares such scepticism.

However, recent 'thought' suggests that we may not have the option of choosing real. Scientists have known for half a century that the world of our senses does not actually exist – at least, not independently of us. They swim happily in an imagined universe of quantum effects and ambiguity which would make the rest of us queasy if we could understand it. Contrary to what crude, pebble-kicking empiricism dictates, the only reality left is that of pure mathematics – everything else is subjective, partial and inconsistent.

Lamentably, the post-modernists have reached similar conclusions: having deconstructed the world into myriad competing discourses with equal claim to validity, they find that they do not much care about any of them (care itself being such an unsophisticated concept). Woolley makes fun of the quantum lifestyle: "I explained to an acquaintance that, unobserved, the sofa he was sitting on was smeared across the universe in a field of unactualised possibilities. 'Really?' he said, looking at it admiringly. 'Where did you get it?'"

But it appears the scientists' calculations cannot be faulted. So, the argument goes, since we choose the reality we inhabit whether we think we do or not, we might as well invent a completely new one. But would it be VR? Computer-based technology has always had as its central purpose order, control and certainty – that's the significance of the binary process which sustains it, right or wrong, on or off, yes or no. Yet humanity has always yearned for less control and more surprises, utilising all kinds of tricks from opium to Blind Man's Buff to achieve this. It is interesting that an exponential burst in technopower in the entertainment industry should have coincided with a revival in story-telling festivals, where one person with a great voice, a good story and no technology at all can enthral thousands.

Technology is not the answer – technology is what we wrap round meaning. Meaning is the point of a story – what it means to us and why. This is why *Days of Thunder* cost \$80 million and made sixpence, while *Boyz n the Hood* cost sixpence and made \$120 million. All the technology that testosterone can pump into VR will not fill the gap until it takes us to places we really want to go – and so far, the itinerary's looking pretty thin. Maybe this is because until now the technical expertise necessary to design it has privileged nerds over artists – hopefully, the next few years should correct that arrangement.

The roaring over VR may turn out to come from an amplified gerbil rather than from a lion, but something is happening to our perception of the world, even if it is only a lot of paradigms being kicked about like footballs. One of the convictions that emerges from reading this book is that all the interesting cultural spawning happens on the vertices between existing subjects. If that's the case, then *Virtual Worlds* should be impossible to find in any bookstore or library – and that would be a real, authentic pity.

Private affairs

Lizzie Francke

Women & Animation: A Compendium
Jayne Pilling (ed), BFI Exhibition and Distribution Division, £8.95, 144pp

During the last year of the Second World War, the animator Lotte Reiniger and her husband Carl Koch returned to their native city of Berlin. They had been living in the relative freedom of Rome, the base of the Italian anti-fascist movement, but back home the pair were forced into hiding. They had no means of communicating with the outside world and soon rumours that they had committed suicide began to circulate. Reiniger arranged for some of her distinctive paper silhouettes to be left in bookshop windows to let people know she was alive and working in the city. These delicate shadows became a code – covert marks of her existence.

The sheer extent of the contribution of the women artists represented in this compendium suggests that animation is a particularly amenable medium through which to make their mark. An animated short offers a certain autonomy of expression in that it does not have to be expensive, can be accomplished through techniques such as collage and cut-outs and lends itself to being carried out in a limited space. As Candy Guard observes, "You can do it secretly, away from prying eyes. It feels more private." In her introduction, editor Jayne Pilling persuasively argues that in the last two decades women have had a greater impact on animation than on live-action feature films. More importantly, she claims that animation offers possibilities not available in live action for exploring women's issues. Animation transgresses the boundaries of live-action realism; it can, as John Canemaker remarks of Suzan Pitt's startling and ground-breaking *Asparagus*, free the audience to become "hypnotised, voyeurs peeping in on a private dream."

Women & Animation is a collection of interviews, filmographies and essays on specific films, together with general overviews of particular artists' work that discuss questions of technique and content. It is an essential companion to the programme of short films chosen for the BFI's recent *Wayward Girls and Wicked Women* video compilation. It is concerned mainly with women animators who have emerged since the 70s, and the material is organised geographically, with brief accounts of each nation's animated film industry. Pilling provides historical contextualisation through the interviews, which include pioneers such as Reiniger and Mary Ellen Bute, whose early abstract films could be described as mobile Kandinskys.

Biographical material reveals that these women came from families who encouraged their artistic ambitions. Reiniger recalls that at the age of 17 her parents enrolled her in Max Reinhardt's influential Theatre School in Berlin so she could meet Paul Wegener, so struck was she by his Expressionist masterpiece *The Golem*. Wegener was equally taken with the young woman's extraordinary talent for silhouette-making and introduced her to a group of young artists who had just set up a studio for experimental film-making. Bute too



Signs of life: Lotte Reiniger at work on her silhouettes, which she used as a code to signal she was still alive while in hiding in wartime Berlin

enjoyed an extensive education in fine arts and drama. When she was rejected for a job teaching drama on the first floating university, her father hired a secretary for her so she could work on unsolicited projects for the department. Every few days she mailed new ideas to the director until eventually she was hired.

Faith Hubley, who with her husband John broke away from Hollywood to develop an impressionist, jazz-inspired style of animation in the 50s, was not so indulged. Her parents shopped their radical student daughter to the FBI. Hubley was one of the earliest women animators to imbue her work with overtly political elements. Not all the animators under discussion demonstrate such a commitment, which helps to avoid any essentialist notion that they share a common 'gender agenda'. Nevertheless, it is the work of those who have chosen to pursue feminist subjects that forms the book's fascinating core. From Joanna Quinn's raucous *Girls' Night Out* to Karen Watson's disturbing essay on child abuse, *Daddy's Little Bit of Dresden China*, the animated shorts featured in this compendium prove that women artists can create real eye-openers.

Biting words

Elizabeth Wilson

Deadline at Dawn: Film Criticism 1980-1990

Judith Williamson, Marion Boyars,
£14.95, 363pp

I never know quite how to read collections of articles. In spite of the author's attempts to create a coherent linking theme for pieces originally written independently, I usually merely browse, sceptical perhaps of their motives, or unconvinced of the long-term importance of what may have

started out as ephemera. These thoughts were prompted by having read most of the brilliantly titled *Deadline at Dawn* at a single sitting – in a quiet bar in Brussels after being locked out of the house where I was staying. It was not an entirely satisfactory experience, despite the book's strengths.

Judith Williamson is our most acute film critic. It is a shame that unlike her predecessors Dilys Powell, C.A. Lejeune and Pauline Kael she lacks a regular prestigious platform. The articles in this collection were mostly written over a period of two years for *City Limits* and *New Statesman and Society*. Since then her regular column for the *Guardian* has also disappeared. Yet her film criticism is far in advance of what we are usually treated to week after week in the broadsheets.

In a brief introduction she discusses her theoretical position and principles. She believes that films are all too often analysed in literary terms which foreground characterisation, authenticity and so on, when they should be discussed as visual forms. She sees them as both symptomatic of contemporary social moods and as culturally strategic, "involving a deliberate use of, and engagement with, the cinematic medium, for some specific aesthetic and/or political purpose."

Secondly, she insists on the importance of mainstream film; it is significant, she argues, that reactionary films such as *Fatal Attraction* and *Three Men and a Baby* are so hugely commercially successful, and we need to understand why this is so, not simply withdraw into the snobbish purity of the art houses. Thirdly, she insists on the importance and the possibility of writing clearly even when writing theoretically.

The essays in the opening section 'Ways of Looking' are admirable, yet I must admit that the greatest pleasure I obtained was from a nostalgic recollection of the 80s – particularly the boom period of 1986-88, from which many of the films discussed come. I enjoyed remembering films I'd liked, films I'd missed and films I'd forgotten, and these reviews constitute an invaluable retrospective commentary on this recent, yet already remote period. The flavour of yuppie hysteria and the style epoch lives again in these pieces.

The stunning cover shows a wilfully smart yet pensive, almost childishly wistful Bette Davis, lost in thought before her typewriter, wearing a 'silly' hat perched lopsidedly. Williamson discusses many films in which just such a contradictory character appears – the single working woman as portrayed in an astonishingly large number of 80s movies, her threat defused, her seriousness sabotaged, her problems prettified (unless she becomes a monster, as in *Fatal Attraction*). Williamson's sensitive feminist analysis reveals just how problematic the screen representation of women was in the 80s – and how far we still have to go.

It may seem carping to find fault with such a valuable contribution to film criticism. But to read *Deadline at Dawn* in one sitting was nevertheless rather like eating – not a whole box of chocolates, for Williamson is never cloying, but a whole packet of tortilla chips or a jar of olives. The inevitable lack of narrative tends to produce a sense of satiation without nourishment, while the necessary similarity of each review eventually deadens the often

limpid insights. To be appreciated, they need to be taken singly, sipped judiciously, like sparkling cocktails. They are certainly cocktails with bite.

Queer feelings

Andy Medhurst

Only Entertainment

Richard Dyer, Routledge, £35 (hb),
£9.99 (pb), 178pp

Pornography and ballet, Hollywood musicals and BBC classic serials, Shirley MacLaine and Donna Summer – what could possibly link such cultural phenomena, except the claim by those who enjoy them that they give pleasure, that they are entertaining?

Entertainment, Richard Dyer argues, is important because "it plays a major role in the social construction of happiness," yet most attempts to study and analyse it make one of two basic mistakes. The first is to veer too quickly into a moralistic critique, a labelling and blaming which sees popular entertainment as ideologically complicit, propagating reprehensible views under cover of surface delights. The second, more recent and perhaps currently dominant tendency is a reaction against the first, eschewing what it sees as the joyless conspiracy theories of political investigation in order to revel in a swooning, post-modern hedonism. Dyer contends that neither of these approaches addresses a tougher, more nebulous question: what is it that makes a text, experience or activity entertaining in the first place?

Only Entertainment is a series of case studies (originally published over a period of 16 years) that tries to suggest some possible answers. It is important to stress both the plural and the lack of certainty. Dyer does not offer any overarching theoretical superstructure – indeed, his work is marked by a deep suspicion of such theory. Neither has he ever been a slave of particular academic trends or intellectual party lines. Many of the pieces in *Only Entertainment* are characterised by a sly relish in flouting fashion, whether this takes the form of choosing which topics to write about (who else would undertake an exhaustive, definitive account of *The Sound of Music* in 1976?) or in self-deprecating one-liners like the one that opens 'In Defence of Disco': "All my life I've liked the wrong music."

Dyer deals, above all, in specifics, acknowledging that he does not "operate very happily on the terrain of big generalisations." During the 70s, of course, the decade in which most of the best of these essays first appeared, such generalisations were thought to be essential if film studies was to be taken seriously. The big boys (not always male) of *Screen* were throwing their hegemonic weight around: sensitive, flexible, socially contextualised analysis was out, which meant, in what retrospectively stands revealed as a scandalous absence, there was no room for Dyer in that journal's dour and relentlessly heterosexual pages throughout the entire decade. He liked Hollywood, he told jokes, he blasphemously neglected *La Grande Syntagmatique* in favour of Lana Turner's frocks. A more congenial space was to be found in, of all places, *Movie*, which in the second half of the 70s ►

◀ became (briefly, bizarrely and perhaps unwittingly) a key conduit of gay film criticism, publishing such Dyer 'classics' as 'Entertainment and Utopia' alongside the more sombre contributions of Robin Wood and Andrew Britton.

Crucially, as far as the Screenies were concerned, Dyer did not sell his soul to psychoanalysis. The insistence that there are other ways of understanding sexuality, pleasure, representation and the body continues to be the most important and intriguing aspect of his critical method. The one new piece in this collection is an introduction which usefully summarises (in a gloves-off, positively scorching manner) exactly why he thinks psychoanalysis is not sufficient, pointing to its normative assumptions about sexual identity, its mystificatory rhetoric, its questionable application of therapeutic strategies designed to account for individual subjectivities to the analysis of texts consumed socially and collectively, and above all its haughty claim to being "a master discourse of truth".

What *Only Entertainment* demonstrates is the folly of such aspirations to infallibility. After all, if a particular theoretical model is held to be the only one that works, this does not leave much room to manoeuvre, as both Screen theorists and Thatcherites have discovered in recent years. Dyer's work, like that of many others who were involved with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, remains useful because of its stress on texts as points of social tension, contradiction, even (and a faint blush shades my swooning, post-modern cheeks as I write this word) struggle. Whether the point at issue is the particular angle of a reclining male pin-up or the ambiguous emotions stirred up by the lyric of a Diana Ross song, what matters is the part played by the consumption of textual meanings in the wider field of social relations. Tired and obvious as it may be to invoke Raymond Williams, what we're talking about here are structures of feeling.

My only quibble with *Only Entertainment* is about where it stops. The last piece in the book is one on gay cultural politics, published in 1981, which now reads like a message from another galaxy, let alone another decade. Shifts in gay subcultural styles and tastes, the debates around the discourse of 'queer', the passionate fury generated by living in the age of Aids, all demand a more contemporary analysis. This aside, it's a characteristically shrewd, witty and richly textured collection. Looking back over this review, I fear my explanatory polysyllables might make the book seem dry and arcane. Nothing could be further from the truth: Dyer's cultural criticism has always been accessible and a sheer pleasure to read, which is why he was such a necessary heretic in the 70s and why he has mattered so much since.

Worlds apart

Rod Stoneman

African Cinema: Politics and Culture

Manthia Diawara, Indiana University Press/Open University Press, £22.50 (hbk), £8.99 (pb), 192pp

The scope of Manthia Diawara's *African Cinema* is aptly described by its subtitle *Politics*



Julie Andrews smiling through: flouting theoretical fashion, Richard Dyer wrote a definitive account of 'The Sound of Music' in 1976

and Culture, for while the book does refer to and analyse a number of specific films, this is almost an afterthought to its extensive examination of distribution, exhibition and production structures. *African Cinema* provides a lucid socio-historical account of these infrastructures and their relation to the development of a strong and diverse cinema on the continent. It performs a much needed delineation of colonial histories at a point when their damaging legacy can still be seen in current 'developmental' policies whereby well-intentioned European aid reinforces new dependencies and further distortion of relations.

Diawara's approach complements existing reference works like Ferid Boughedir's *Le Cinéma Africain A à Z*, Keith Shiri's *Directory of African Film-makers and Films* and the recent *Arab and African Film Making* by Lizbeth Malkmus and Roy Armes. But useful though they are, these books fall short of arguing for an understanding of the complex field of African film production. This volume, which seems to have been written mostly in the mid-80s, was apparently offered to BFI Publishing several years ago. This was an opportunity missed, since the BFI's imprint is arguably better positioned than an academic press to publish a book which has a political role in current debates as well as scholarly exposition.

Diawara's prose suffers from occasional ungainly and inelegant formulations and there are persistent typographical errors – organisational acronyms are inconsistent and the Mozambican producer Pedro Pimenta is referred to as Pimente throughout. A comment by Serge Daney about a Med Hondo film is massacred in translation: "Sarrounia... remains the falsely rebelled dinosaur that was sulked by us in Paris."

Despite its title, *African Cinema* is devoted to the recent history of sub-Saharan cinema. Frustratingly, this implicit geographic and cultural restriction is never explained or justified. The exclusion of the North African countries represents a serious limitation, as the Tunis and Ouagadougou festivals and FEPACI (the film-makers' organisation) – integral parts of the founding of independent African cinema – have always combined both Arab and black African cinemas. Arab cinema offers different examples of state funding and a contrast between the new quality cinemas of the Maghreb and popular films emanating from Egypt's well-established, large-scale industry. Indeed, Diawara's report on the recent Carthage festival in Tunis in the February 1993 issue of *Sight and Sound* emphasises a new dynamic emanating from North Africa. More understandably, the book makes no mention of film-making in South Africa, which has had an isolated and diverted experience, though its neighbours warily anticipate its far-reaching economic and cultural power as the country haltingly rejoins the rest of Africa.

Inevitably, a great deal of space is devoted to the francophone countries. Financial support from the French government has clearly benefited its ex-colonies – Senegal is something of the California of the continent – but film-makers have consistently had to challenge the problematic terms on which this support is given. Diawara indicates some of the shifting combinations of economic and cultural self-interest that often characterise French (and

US) activities in film distribution. One could also usefully explore the cultural legacy of the different short-lived colonial regimes and their interaction with the underlying indigenous cultures.

Diawara provides counterbalance to the Paris-Dakar axis through attention to the anglophone and lusophone countries, sketching, for example, the fascinating period in the construction of Mozambican cinema when, in 1978, such divergent cinéastes as Jean Rouch, Ruy Guerra and Jean-Luc Godard were all in Maputo proposing different possibilities and models for film development. The lack of opportunity for intelligent or imaginative television work in Africa has increased the isolation and financial constraints of cinema. This has had negative effects on the development of creative documentary work (in comparison to Latin America or Asia, for instance). The situation could change with the arrival of African satellites like Canal Horizon, which started last year.

The increasing funding from European television raises the complex and pertinent question of how money coming from the north affects or modifies African films in general. One of the real strengths of African cinema in recent years has been its sustaining interaction with the fast-changing ferment of African culture and society. The influence of unconscious European predilections, combined with the problems of exhibition in Africa, offer the terrifying prospect of a cinema produced for export. This is a danger that film-makers themselves are determined to resist; the book points towards the development of government initiatives, intra-African co-production, and co-operation between Third World countries.

This is a timely volume, as African film-makers themselves reassess the story so far, and as African cinema reaches European audiences through festivals and television screenings. These developments demand to be discussed in international terms, as the new and exciting connections with contemporary African-American culture in a vibrant and hybrid film like the Cameroonian *Quartier Mozart* indicate. *African Cinema* offers an outstanding clarification of structural and political issues at a critical point in the continent's cultural and economic development.

King of comedy

David Caute

Christmas in July: The Life and Art of Preston Sturges

Diane Jacobs, University of California Press, \$30, 525pp

"In the 40s," wrote Pauline Kael in an article about Cary Grant, "there were still some screwball comedies, but they were antic and shrill, except for a few strays... [such as] the comedies in which Preston Sturges reinvented slapstick in a more organic form – creating an image of Americans as a people who never stopped explaining themselves while balling up whatever they were trying to do." In her absorbing biography of Sturges, Diane Jacobs arrives at a complementary insight: Sturges' approach to comedy was to drive his protagonists into a box where they seem to be beyond hope of res-

cue - and then ingeniously to extricate them, resolving matters with a happy ending so improbable that it invites a smile at comic convention.

Having made waves as a playwright and screenwriter during the 30s, Sturges was desperate to get behind the directorial wheel. He offered Paramount his script of *The Great McGinty* for \$1 in return for what was then, Jacobs reports, a unique billing in Hollywood: 'Written and directed by...' The film catapulted him to fame. In a stunning outburst of creative energy sponsored by Paramount, the 40-year-old Sturges wrote and directed eight films between 1940 and 1944, turning himself into a household name and, at \$6,000 a week, one of the highest-paid properties in Hollywood. Though a tough professional, eclectic in his choice of storylines, a loner unimpressed by the political furor then blazing in Hollywood (he coolly declined membership of the Screen Writers Guild), Sturges generated a distinctive *oeuvre* out of the comic collisions between the players and the parts. This coherence could not have been achieved without his insistence on directing his own scripts. In the 50s, when he was bankrupt, debt-ridden, semi-alcoholic and self-exiled from Hollywood, *Cahiers du cinéma* bestowed on him its pantheonic auteur award; André Bazin acclaimed a genius of American satire. Today, *The Great McGinty*, *Christmas in July*, *The Lady Eve*, *The Palm Beach Story*, *Sullivan's Travels*, *Hail the Conquering Hero* and *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* have achieved legendary status.

Sturges fell out with the major studio system. Despite the loyal admiration of Paramount's boss, Frank Freeman, Sturges was soon at odds with the prototypical hatchetmen hired to bully directors about budgets, excessive retakes and shooting schedules. Itching now for complete independence, he turned down a new contract and quit Paramount in December 1943. During a later phase at Fox, under the great Darryl Zanuck, he hit the same reef. Jacobs'

delicately restrained portrait of Sturges-the-man subtly exposes a wild chart of centrifugal and centripetal forces. Here was an artist concentrating almost manic energies on making films, while simultaneously driven to dissipate himself in the approved activities of the Sunset Strip male. Though he confined himself to four wives, his extensive line of mistresses and quick flings makes increasingly depressing reading, as the human damage and semi-abandoned children multiply with the years. Often he resembles a Scott Fitzgerald hero written by Hemingway: the yachts, the splash parties, the swinging restaurant he owned, his passion for engineering and invention, his ill-fated partnership with Howard Hughes, the womanising, increasingly subtracted down to blind bravado as time went on. Diane Jacobs comments that Sturges, like Fitzgerald's rich, had to be different, had to lead a life as vivacious, fragmented and surprising as his films.

By the age of 50 Sturges was in permanent eclipse. His scintillating career as a director had lasted barely a decade. But Jacobs' narrative is no less fascinating in dealing with his declining years in Paris or the long stretch of childhood and youth he spent in France with his itinerant mother Mary Desti, a close friend of Isadora Duncan, and as the adopted son of the solid, dependable stockbroker Solomon Sturges, Preston's US anchor. Art and money, bohemia and the stock exchange, Europe and the US, Molière and Harold Lloyd all stake their claims on the buccaneering talent of Preston Sturges.

Jacobs has written a critical biography capable of conveying parallel narratives - the Preston and the Sturges. Hers is a technically expert investigation of Sturges' work as process as well as product - a remarkable achievement when biographies of film directors generally focus on the sexual and industrial politics of a glamorous profession while leaving us to guess why the work justifies a 'life'.

How the other half laughs:
Joel McCrea and Veronica Lake mingle with the masses in Preston Sturges' comic masterpiece, 'Sullivan's Travels'



shorts

High Anxiety: Catastrophe, Scandal, Age, & Comedy

Patricia Mellencamp, Indiana University Press/Open University Press, £30 (hb), £14.99 (pb), 414pp

Fascinating to read but practically impossible to review, Mellencamp's book takes a highly original approach to contemporary everyday culture. Personal and impressionistic, yet precisely and elegantly argued, it mimics television 'flow', moving through disparate theories and texts to demonstrate common obsessions in subjects as diverse as Operation Desert Storm, *Murder, She Wrote*, Oprah Winfrey, *I Love Lucy*, *Twin Peaks*, gossip and ageing bodies.

The Illustrated Vampire Movie Guide

Stephen Jones, Titan Books, £9.99, 144pp



Jones' book - which he claims is 'more complete than most' - surveys vampire movies from the 20s to the present day, including *Dracula*, a Hungarian feature made in 1921 and now lost, which is probably the first movie adaptation of Stoker's novel, preceding Murnau's *Nosferatu* by a year. A ratings system awards chiropterous mammals to the author's favourites; inexplicably, Stephanie Rothman's stylish *The Velvet Vampire* scores only one and a half, while Nicolas Cage in the wonderfully wacky *Vampire's Kiss* (above) picks up a mere two. An appendix is devoted to vampires on television.

Adult Comics: An Introduction

Roger Sabin, Routledge, £35 (hb), £9.99 (pb), 321pp

Although adult comics have boomed only relatively recently, freelance arts journalist Sabin's historical survey, the first of its kind, traces the roots of the 80s explosion in the nineteenth century. He takes a broad sweep, covering comics from the US, Europe and Japan and taking in pre-First World War titles, underground comix of the 60s and 70s and contemporary graphic novels. Among the issues addressed are cultural overspill and the role of women. Attractively produced and generously illustrated in black and white.

Reframing Japanese Cinema: Authorship, Genre, History

Arthur Nalletti Jr and David Desser (eds), Indiana University Press/Open University Press, £32.50 (hb), £15.99 (pb), 365pp

A collection which attempts to recontextualise Japanese cinema from the perspective of theoretical shifts in film studies. The section entitled 'History' concentrates on the 20s and 30s and the struggle to create a distinctive national cinema in opposition to the Hollywood model, demonstrating through detailed analyses the specificity of Japanese narrative and stylistic modes.

REVIEWS

Reviews, synopses and full credits for all the month's new films and new British TV films

Annabelle Partagée

France 1990

Director: Francesca Comencini

Certificate

18

Distributor

Gala

Production Company
ca films

Producers

Sophie Delochée

Anne Fieschl

Associate Producer

Frank Le Wita

Costing

Nathalie Cheron

Screenplay

Francesca Comencini

Director of Photography

Michel Abramowicz

In colour

Steadicam Operator

Jacques Monge

Editor

Yves Deschamps

Set Design

Valérie Grall

Set Decorators

Denis Barbier

Philippe Bouchérot

Special Effects

Jean-François Cousson

Music

Les Valentins

Etienne Daho

Songs

"Caribbean Sea" by

E. Daho, E. Fambuena,

performed by Les

Valentins, Etienne

Daho, Armande Altai;

"Trois fois rien",

"Ballade pour elle",

"Une chambre à Lunel".

"Vertiges", "Café des

deux mondes",

"A la Sainte Luce"

Costume Design

Valentine Breton

de Loys

Make-up

Pascale Bouquière

Sound Recordists

Philippe Combes

Paul Berrault

Sound Effects

Laurent Lévy

Jack Julian

Pascal Mazière

Cast

Delphine Zingg

Annabelle

François Martheur

Richard

Jean-Claude Adelin

Luca

Florence Thomassin

Dominique Régnier

Joanne Elias

Jean Chorlian

Sofian Elbaum

Pierre Forget

Pascal Gauthier

Gilbert Grosso

Liliane Lisoren

Claudine Taulere

Alain Valois

7,183 feet

80 minutes

Subtitles

Annabelle, a young woman whose family comes from the country, lives in Paris where she is training to be a dancer. She spends time with her boyfriend Richard, an architect and friend of her father's, but it is an unsatisfactory relationship, partly because he is twice her age. One night she and her best friend Laurence go out on the town and meet an old friend of Laurence's, Luca. He asks her to join them for the evening, and Annabelle, annoyed by this intrusion, decides not to come. Later that night she wanders the streets in search of Luca and finds him early the next morning. They hang out together; with Luca, Annabelle feels that she can have a more orthodox relationship. She tells Richard that their affair is over. Though apprehensive, she decides to move in with Luca. Before she does so,



Rubble and stubble: Delphine Zingg

she visits Richard, hoping for his blessing. The cracks in Annabelle's relationship with Luca soon start to show as they squabble about the pettiest things. Deciding to move out, Annabelle visits Richard but their affair is not resumed. Annabelle cycles off into the night, a single woman.

Written and directed by Francesca Comencini, and produced by two women, *Annabelle Partagée* might initially seem to fulfil the publicity notes' rather clumsily phrased promise that it is "a sexual exploration from a woman's point of view". A strictly heterosexual film, this only seems to mean that many sex scenes include the odd tastefully lit shot of an erect penis. For the viewer, there is no sense of the male body being eroticised in any other way, nor is there any sense that Annabelle finds her affairs greatly pleasurable. What we are left with is little more than another mooching-about-Paris, mooning-about-relationships film, in which Annabelle vacillates between the two men in her life, only to decide in the very last scene that she might be better off for a while on her own. Her best friend Laurence and her career as a dancer seem to count for little in her interminable ponderings on the meaning of life, which include such existential teasers as "Have you ever wanted to love someone and not been able?" and "What are we doing here?"

But it is in Annabelle's dispatches to her mother that her real dilemma becomes clear. For she writes that now she has left the security of her childhood home, "the idea of death is all that exists." Annabelle might be divided over Richard and Luca, but the real conflict is over the fact that she is on the cusp of adolescence and adulthood - rather surprising given that she is 25 years old. Richard and Luca are merely symptoms of this quandary. With Richard, the older man and friend of her father, there are obvious incestuous overtones; they read Moravia's *The Thing*, a story of too familiar familial love, while Annabelle telephones her father, telling him, "I was thinking of you", when it is obvious that she has Richard on her mind.

As her equal in age, Luca is presented initially as the more suitable partner with whom Annabelle can have a mature live-in relationship rather than play the eternal daughter. But the romance soon disintegrates over petty squabbles about what she wears to a party or how he goes about his domestic chores. It is unclear whether this is meant to be ironic, but their grievances with each other seem to be a parody of partnership paralysis. Ambiguously, Richard, the architect, represents a solid, well-designed future - Annabelle is surrounded by houses that are being torn down - while Luca finds that a favourite childhood haunt is being demolished. It is a small plus point that Annabelle finally decides to forge ahead and build her own life out of the rubble.

Lizzie Francke

Candyman

USA 1992

Director: Bernard Rose

Certificate

18

Distributor

Rank

Production Company

Candyman Films

For Propaganda Films

Executive Producer

Clive Barker

Producers

Steve Golin

Sigurjon Sighvatsson

Alan Paul

Executive in Charge

of Production

Tim Clawson

Line Producer

Gregory Goodman

Production Associate

Jonathan Wiedemann

Production Supervisor

Billy Higgins

Production Co-ordinators

Michelle Colbert

Elaine Fiona Ferguson

Lisa Barratt

Production Manager

Greg Cundiff

Unit Production Managers

Greg Cundiff

Charlene Norman

Location Manager

Boyd H. Wilson

Post-production

Supervisor

Scott Carleton

Post-production Controller

Glenn Kiser

Costing

Jason La Padura

ADR Voice:

Barbara Harris

Assistant Directors

Thomas Patrick Smith

Suzanne L. Haasis

Marcie A. Brubaker

Peggy Hughes

David Riebel

Screenplay

Bernard Rose

Based on the short

story *The Forbidden* by

Clive Barker

Director of Photography

Anthony B. Richmond

Colour

DeLuxe

Camera Operators

William Waiden

Michael Ferris

Steadicam Operators

Randy Nolan

Kirk Gardner

Visual Effects

Cruise and Company

Supervisor:

Allen Blaisdell

Art Director:

Joshua Culp

Optical Effects Supervisor

W. Dale Russell

Editor

Dan Rae

Production Designer

Jane Ann Stewart

Art Director

David Lazan

Set Decorator

Kathryn Peters

Set Dresser

Bruce Belamy

Illustrators

Sean Hargreaves

John Coven

Shelly Peterson

Special Effects

Martin Breslin

Music

Philip Glass

Music Director

Michael Riesman

Music Performed By

The Western Wind

Vocal Ensemble

Music Arrangements

Michael Riesman

Music Producers

Kurt Munkacs

Executive:

Rory Johnston

Costume Design

Leonard Pollack

Wardrobe Supervisor

Julia Schklair

Costumer

Chanel Salzer

Make-up

Michelle Buhler

Special Make-up Effects

Bob Keen

Image Animation

Artists:

Mark Coulter

Dave Keen

Sound Design

Nigel Holland

Sound Supervisors

Nigel Holland

Chuck Smith

Leonard Marcel

Sound Editor

Peter Carlstedt

Sound Recordists

Reinhard Stergar

Greg Steele

ADR Recordists

Charleen Richards

Scott Ganary

Ailan Bond

Foley Recordists

Tommy Goodwin

Tami Treadwell

Dolby stereo

Consultant:

Steve F. B. Smith

Sound Re-recordists

Ken S. Polk

Michael Barry

Foley Artists

Joan Rowe

Ellen Heuer

Sean Rowe

Stunt Co-ordinator

Walter Scott

Stunts

William Washington

Debbie Lynn Ross

Phil Chong

Bee Specialist

Norman Gary

Cast

Virginia Madsen

Helen Lyle

Kasi Lemmons

Bernadette Walsh

Xander Berkeley

Trevor Lyle

De Juan Gay

Jake

Tony Todd

Candyman

Vanessa Williams

Anne-Marie McCoy

Marianna Elliott

Clara

Ted Raimi

Billy

Gilbert Lewis

Detective Frank

Valento

John Rensenhouse

Attorney

Carolyn Lowery

Stacey

Doug MacHugh

Carol Harris

Orderlies

Teresa Higgins

Gang Leader

Rio Parva

Monica

Michael Cullin

Purcell

Barbara Akzon

Henrietta

Serina Grant

Kitty Calver

Randy Schrammer
 Policewoman
Mark Daniels
 Boy
Diane Peterson
 Nurse
Lisa Ann Poggi
 Diane
Adam Philpott
 Danny
Eric Edwards
 Harold
Mika Quintana
 TV Reporter
Glenda Starr Kelly
 Crying Mother

Kenneth Brown
 Castrated Boy
Letasha Martin
 Letasha Martin
Baby Anthony
 Bernard Rose
Archie Walsh
 Caesar Brown
Tough Guy
Michael Williams
 Priest

\$914 feet
99 minutes

Chicago. With her colleague Bernadette Walsh, academic Helen Lyle is preparing a thesis on Candyman, the hook-handed murderer of urban legend. Upset because her husband Trevor has pre-empted her research by lecturing on the topic, Helen takes Bernadette to Cabrini Green, a run-down housing project where Candyman stories are rife. On the estate, Helen meets Anne-Marie McCoy, a single mother, and Jake, a street kid, and hears new Candyman stories about atrocities committed within living memory in an abandoned apartment and a public toilet. Investigating the toilet, Helen is attacked by a gang-leader with a hook who claims to be Candyman. After identifying her attacker to the police, Helen returns home and is shocked by a vision of Candyman. Instantly transported to Anne-Marie's house, Helen finds herself in a pool of blood next to a decapitated dog and attacked by Anne-Marie, whose baby has disappeared. Defending herself, Helen is arrested on suspicion of kidnapping and released into Trevor's care.

Candyman appears in Helen's apartment to ask her to join him in his mythic existence and when Bernadette intervenes, he guts her, leaving Helen to be charged with murder. After a month under restraint in a mental asylum, Helen tries to convince her doctor that Candyman is real by repeating his name five times into a mirror - the accepted way of summoning him - and the monster appears to kill the doctor, allowing Helen to escape. Returning home, she finds Trevor has taken up with one of his students and she is driven to return to Cabrini Green, where Candyman offers to let the missing baby live if she joins him. She consents but the monster tries to cheat her. The residents set fire to the pile of rubbish where Candyman is hiding and Helen crawls free with the baby, dying while Candyman burns. At her funeral, the Cabrini residents pay tribute to Helen for defeating Candyman. Later, when a grief-stricken Trevor repeats Helen's name into a mirror, she reappears with a hook hand to kill him.

In adapting and elaborating on 'The Forbidden', a story from Volume Five of Clive Barker's *Books of Blood*, Bernard Rose has done an even more skilful job of translating Barker's singular approach to the screen than the author himself achieved in *Hellraiser* and *Nightbreed*. Rose retains Barker's outré imagery, even taking the story's first sentence ('the perfect geometry of



Tooth of crime: Virginia Madsen

the Spector Street Estate was only visible from the air") as a cue for a Saul Bass-style title sequence and frequent punctuating vertical overhead shots of calm cityscapes. He also strengthens the brittle characterisation and slim plot that sometimes render Barker's stories rather remote. In shifting the story from Liverpool to Chicago, the film loses out only once - stripped of its Guy Fawkes function, the large bonfire that provides the climax is rather puzzling in the context of urban America. Otherwise much is gained in the way of background, including the based-on-fact twinning of the Cabrini Green ghetto with Helen's condominium, a building erected as public housing but converted to yuppie use, so that Helen's trespass begins even before she ventures out among the disenfranchised.

Cunningly establishing its ground rules with a succession of dramatised Candyman anecdotes and variations related to Helen in the course of her research, the film taps into the rich vein of urban legend that has sustained such series as the *Halloween* and *Elm Street* sagas, but for the first time

addresses the process of mythification itself rather than simply using a nursery rhyme to 'explain' a monster's origins. Candyman, a striking black figure who is at once a grimmer literal spook than Freddy Krueger and a menacing incarnation of the metaphorical 'spook' perceived as a threat by white America, draws his strength from the stories told about him. In dialogue lifted verbatim from the original text, he almost seductively asks Helen to join him in an anecdote: "Your death would be a parable to frighten children with, lovers would use it as an excuse to cling closer together."

In adding to the plot complications of the story, Rose has given the underrated Virginia Madsen room to develop a strong performance as the superficial academic forced to confront actual suffering and horror. He intersperses the expected but perfectly-realised supernatural encounters between Helen and Tony Todd's hollow-eyed, fur-coated, hook-handed bogeyman with unexpected Hitchcockian reversals, as when a bloodied and hysterical Helen is calmly strip-searched by an impassive matron, or in the complex betrayals

and fears summoned in her post-escape confrontation with her errant husband and his terrified girlfriend. The film combines an overall predictability, as Helen is drawn into Candyman's dark place like the protagonist of an episode from a 60s Amicus anthology, with a scene-to-scene sense of surprise as the plot progresses in daring leaps and ellipses which powerfully convey Helen's increasing bewilderment and fear.

As with *Paperhouse*, his debut feature, Rose enjoys marshalling the archetypal ingredients of the horror genre - knee-jerk shocks, stalking bogeyman, touches of dark humour - but also locates the horrors in an identifiable and credible landscape of urban decay (in contrast to the neo-Dickensian parody of ghetto life in Wes Craven's *The People Under the Stairs* for example, the Cabrini Green estate is a model of sociological accuracy). Candyman's bee-swarming, gut-splitting, family-destroying horrors have their root in a subtle malaise that is ultimately a lot scarier than the admittedly relishable monster movie business.

Kim Newman

Consenting Adults

USA 1992

Director: Alan J. Pakula

Certificate
15

Distributor
Buena Vista

Production Company
Hollywood Pictures

Executive Producer
Pieter Jan Brugge

Producers
Alan J. Pakula
David Permut

Co-producer
Katie Jacobs

Production Co-ordinator
Teresa M. Yarbrough

Unit Production Manager
Celia D. Costas

Location Managers
John B. Griffin Jr
John Panzarella
Lori Balton

Location Co-ordinator
Steve Rhea

Casting
Alix Gordin

Assistant Directors
Alan B. Curtis
John Rusk
Robert Huberman

Screenplay
Matthew Chapman

Director of Photography
Stephen Goldblatt

Colour
Technicolor

Camera Operator
Ray de la Motte

Editor
Sam O'Steen

Production Designer
Carol Spier

Art Director
Alicia Keywan

Set Design
Thomas Minton
Kathleen Sullivan

Set Decorator
Gretchen Rau

Set Dressers
Jean-Paul V. Menard
John T. Bromell
Michael A. Shapiro
John Ceniceros

Special Effects
Co-ordinator
Connie Brink

Music/Music Director
Michael Small

Orchestrations
Christopher Dedrick
Sonny Koppanek

Music Supervisor
Joe Mulherin

Music Editor
Todd Kasow

Songs
"No Headstone on My Grave" by Charlie Rich
"Looking Back" by Clyde Otis, Brook Benton, Belford Hendricks
"I'm Too Far Gone to Turn Around" by Clyde Otis, Belford Hendricks, performed by Q Rose
"Cheek to Cheek" by Irving Berlin, performed by Kevin Spacey
"I Wanna Piece of the Party", "TBD Shuffle", "Blues Connection", "The Night Has Many Eyes" by Joe Mulherin
"As Time Goes By" by Herman Hupfeld

Costume Design
Gary Jones
Ann Roth

Costume Supervisor
Bruce Erickson

Key Costumers
Cheryl Beasley
Blackwell
Kevin P. Faherty
Jon Edward Deary

Make-up Artists
Fern Buchner
Ben Nye Jr

Hair/Opticals
John Alagna
The Effects House

Sound Design
CS, Inc

Supervising Sound Editor
Ron Bochar

Sound Editors
Fred Rosenberg
Laura Civiello

ADR Supervisor
Deborah Wallace

Foley Supervisor
Bruce Pross

Foley Editors
Frank Kern
Steven Visscher
Eliza Pailey

Sound Recordists
James J. Sabat

Musicians
Stephen Krause
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists
Richard Portman
Mike Cerone

Foley Artist
Marco Costanzo

Stunt Co-ordinator
Doug Coleman

Stunts
Gary Wayton
Liza Sweeney
Doug Coleman
Bill Judkins
Jim Wilkey

Cost
Kevin Kline
Richard Parker
Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio
Priscilla Parker
Kevin Spacey
Eddy Otis
Rebecca Miller
Kay Otis
Forest Whitaker
David Duttonville
E. G. Marshall
George Gordon
Kimberly McCullough
Lori Parker
Billie Neal
Annie Duttonville
Benjamin Hendrickson
Jimmy Schwartz
Lennie Smith
Dr Pattering
Joe Mulherin
Bo
Rick Hinkle
Singer in Mahoney's Band
Artis Edwards Jr
Atlanta Police Officer
Jerry Campbell
Prison Guard
Ginny Parker
Martha
Judson Vaughn
Max Roth
Bill Grady
Mr Watkins
Suzanne Stewart
Mrs Watkins
Bruce Evans
Maxie
Nance Plachta
Woman in Blues Connection

L. Warren Young
Musician in Blues Connection
Edward Seamon
Hotel Desk Clerk
Shelly Pinsky
Woman in Dressing Room
Thomas Saccio
Johnny Rocco
D. L. Anderson
Phone Company Woman
Janette Lane Bradbury
Dry Cleaner Woman
Tommy Crosswell
Charleston Detective
Robert C. Traveller
Michael L. Nesbitt
Charleston Deputies

Michelle Moore
Trudy Seaton
Deborah Lucas
Jennifer Swagg
Suzi Selman
Birthday Party Girls
Mark Wood
Meredith Brasher
Jeffrey Charlton
Michelle Smith
Dean Taylor
Nan McElroy
Christmas Carolers
Mary K. E. Packer-Phillips
Joanne E. Davis
Laura Griffin
Robb Harleston
Rachel C. MacRae
Susan T. Haldary
Rehab Counselors

\$901 feet
99 minutes

While out jogging, jingle composer Richard Parker is joined by a new neighbour, Eddy, a financial advisor, who invites him and his wife Priscilla to dinner. There they meet Eddy's glamorous wife Kay. Next morning while cycling, Eddy invites Richard and Priscilla away for the weekend. He says Richard should take more risks - and proves his point by cycling straight at an oncoming lorry. The weekend goes well; Eddy is attentive to Priscilla while Kay, a talented singer, talks to Richard. Back home at boxing practice, Eddy, who has discovered that Richard owes \$25,000, offers to give him the money.

Later, as Richard and Priscilla are driving out of their garage, Eddy leaps in front of them and is knocked down. A few weeks afterwards, he reveals that this was a scam for the medical insurance. He gives Richard and Priscilla a cheque, which they accept doubtfully. On another weekend away, Eddy suggests that the couples swap partners for the night; Richard is shocked and his refusal leads to a rift in the friendship. Aggrieved that he hasn't told her why they no longer see Eddy and Kay, Priscilla asks Richard if he's slept with Kay. When she too calls him a wimp, he goes to make his peace with Eddy.

One night, after an afternoon playing baseball, Eddy and Richard swap bedrooms, and Richard has sex with Kay. The next morning, he discovers that Kay has been killed with the baseball bat and that Eddy is accusing him of the murder. No one believes Richard's story, especially since Eddy has an alibi five hours drive away. In prison, Richard's lawyer advises him to plead guilty, while Priscilla tells him that she is leaving him.

Richard, released on bail until his trial, goes home and meets David, an insurance investigator. Richard learns that Eddy had a double indemnity policy for \$1.5 million on Kay, and drives to the cabin which provided Eddy's alibi, but the owners see him off with a rifle. At a motel, he hears Kay's voice on the radio. Sure that she's still alive, and that a lookalike was killed in her place, he discovers that the recording was made the previous week. David tells him that Eddy and Priscilla, now lovers, have opened a rehab clinic. Richard takes a boat out to the clinic and watches Eddy, Priscilla

and his daughter. When Priscilla drives into town, he confronts her, making her promise to play Eddy the tape of Kay. Hearing the tape, Eddy denies it is Kay, and breaks the tape recorder. Eddy watches as Richard meets his daughter in secret. Tracing Eddy's calls, Richard and David find out that Kay is in a Savannah hotel. Richard rushes to see her, but she claims she knew nothing about Eddy's plans until he told her after the murder. Richard is sent downstairs on a hoax call; when he returns, Kay too has been murdered. Richard goes to Priscilla and Eddy's house, where the police arrive to look for him. Priscilla finds out that Eddy has been to Savannah and, realising the truth, tries to make a run for it; but Eddy is waiting for her. Richard takes Eddy by surprise and the two men fight; just as Eddy is about to kill him, Priscilla knocks him on the head with a baseball bat. Later, Priscilla and Richard sit in traffic, listening to their story on the radio. They move into a new house, this time on deserted land.

No current psychological thriller would be complete without its references to Hitchcock. *Consenting Adults* tips the wink at *Vertigo* with a 'dead' woman who comes back to life, and nudges *Rear Window* with repeated looking-through-windows shots: Eddy at Priscilla, Priscilla at Richard, Richard at Kay. The *Vertigo* steal is just reverential plunder, but the *Rear Window* references have more of a point since voyeurism is central to the plot: Richard desires what is forbidden, his neighbour's wife, while Eddy acts out his scams from his observation of his victims' weaknesses. But the perfunctory intercutting of the watching scenes with the story underlines the point heavily-handedly. The combination of writer Matthew Chapman, who was responsible for the bizarre erotic thriller *Heart of Midnight*, and director Pakula, whose best bet in this market was the tense *Kluge*, might have just worked - but for the fact that Chapman's story only seems to last for half the film. Like last year's *Unlawful Entry*, it's a yuppie-in-moral-peril saga, bringing together the idyll of suburban America with biblical morality: the



No net curtains: Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio

film's catchline is "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife".

The catalyst is the diabolical, larger-than-life Eddy, edging the Parkers on - first with money, then with sex - towards self-destruction. In Eddy's obsession with money hangs another moral tale; literally his lust for life, it makes him a sociopath. All of this works subtly enough until Richard is accused of Kay's murder. After that, the plot, which has kept deftly on its wicked course, becomes a series of discoveries to speed Richard back to normality and forgiveness. To help him in the face of adversity, he is given one friend: Forest Whitaker, absolutely charming as the innocent-looking investigator (just in case we hadn't noticed how charming, an otherwise inexplicably located scene shows him at his charming home, a charming husband and father).

The introduction, over halfway through the film, of a character whose only purpose is to supply Richard with information, is a sign that something has gone wrong. By the time it reaches the all too familiar fight-to-the-death climax, the movie has given up and resorted simply to telling the story. The only redeeming feature is that despite the premonition of blood-letting in Richard and Eddy's endless male bonding activities (jogging, cycling, boxing), it's Priscilla who strikes the eventual death blow.

Though there's also a sneaky humour in the repetition of those macho activities, it detracts from the business at hand. *Consenting Adults* never really gets to grips with fear, guilt or horror because it keeps moving one ironic step away from itself - and consequently from our sympathy with its protagonists. Another example comes at the end, when any sense of catharsis is undercut by the jokey revelation that the Parkers' new house has no neighbours. A wide-eyed Kevin Kline is convincing as the innately decent but corruptible Richard, particularly in his guilty, tentative attraction towards Rebecca Miller's overly pouty Kay. However, once he's run the gamut of emotions culminating in her murder, he starts to be led simply by the plot, making use of all that exercise by running, climbing and bursting through windows for all he's worth. Kevin Spacey's Eddy can do no wrong as the chirpily self-aggrandizing salesman from hell. But anyone expecting the usual spunkiness from Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio will be disappointed. Although Priscilla delivers the final blow, she's characterised either as a moral foil to Richard, or as a cypher for the action - her leaving Richard is as unbelievable as her sudden suspicion of Eddy. Like a number of recent thrillers, this is far better at creating its dilemma than solving it. The wish to restore order and let the audience go home happy is unarguable. But it would be a change if an intelligently thought-out film like this also chose to remind us why it made us feel uncomfortable in the first place.

Amanda Lipman

Honeymoon in Vegas

USA 1992

Director: Andrew Bergman

Certificates

12

Distributor

First Independent

Production Company

Castle Rock

Entertainment

In association with

New Line Cinema

Executive Producer

Neil Machlis

Producer

Mike Lobell

Associate Producer

Adam Merims

Production Controller

Steve Warner

Production Co-ordinator

Michele Imperato

Unit Production Manager

Neil Machlis

Location Managers

Iddo Lampton

Enochs Jnr

Randy Spangler

2nd Unit Director

Mark Parry

Casting

Michael Fenton

Valorie Massalas

Co-ordinator:

Allison Gordon-Kohler

Assistant Directors

Yudi Bennett

Deborah Kent

Daniel G. Silverberg

Jeff Okabayashi

2nd Unit:

Robert Rooy

Scott Senechal

Screenplay

Andrew Bergman

Director of Photography

William A. Fraker

Colour

CFI

Prints by:

Technicolor

Underwater Photography

Ron Taylor

Valerie Taylor

Aerial Photography

Ray Cottingham

Camera Operators

David Diano

Aerial:

Rexford L. Metz

Steadicam Operator

Randy Nolen

Opticals

Pacific Title

Animation

Bob Kurtz

Kurtz & Friends

Editor

Barry Malkin

Production Designer

William A. Elliott

Art Director

John Warnke

Set Design

Larry Hubbs

Set Decorator

Linda De Scenna

Set Dressers

Donn Piller

John Rankin

Nancy Gilmore

Production Illustrator

Mark Baird

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Stan Parks

Special Effects

Kevin Quibell

Music/Orchestrations

David Newman

Music Supervisor

Peter Afterman

Music Editors

Thomas Drescher

Craig Pettigrew

Songs

"Vival Las Vegas"

by Doc Pomus, Mort

Shuman, performed

by Bruce Springsteen;

"That's All Right"

by Arthur Crudup,

performed by Vince

Gill; "Hound Dog"

by Jerry Leiber, Mike

Stoller, performed

by Jeff Beck, Jed Leiber;

"Love Me Tender"

by Elvis Presley, Vera

Matson, performed

by Amy Grant;

"Are You Lonesome

Tonight" by Roy

Turk, Lou Handman,

performed by Bryan

Ferry; "All Shook Up"

by Otis Blackwell, Elvis

Presley, "Heartbreak

Hotel" by Mae Boren

Axton, Tommy Durden,

Elvis Presley,

performed by Billy Joel;

"Blue Hawaii" by Ralph

Rainger, Leo Robin,

performed by Willie

Nelson; "Jailhouse

Rock" by Jerry Leiber,

Mike Stoller,

performed by John

Mellencamp; ("You're

the Devil in Disguise"

by Bill Giant, Bernie

Baum, Florence Kaye,

performed by Trisha

Yearwood; "Suspicious

Minds" by Mark James,

performed by Dwight

Yoakam; "Burning

Love" by Dennis Linde,

performed by Travis

Tritt; "Wear My Ring

Around Your Neck"

by Russell Moody, Bert

Carroll, performed

by Ricky Van Shelton;

"Surrender" by G.B.

DeCurtis, E. DeCurtis,

Doc Pomus, Mort

Shuman, "Jailhouse

Rock" by Jerry Leiber,

Mike Stoller, "That's

All Right" by Arthur

Crudup, "It's Now or

Never" by Aaron

Schroeder, Wally Gold,

performed by Elvis

Presley; "Can't Help

Falling in Love" by

George Weiss, Hugo

Peretti, Luigi Creatore,

performed by

(1) Elvis Presley,

(2) Clarence Giddons,

Bruno Hernandez;

("Let Me Be Your Teddy

Bear" by Kal Mann,

Bernie Lowe,

performed by Robert

Kim; "La Donna e

mobile" by Giuseppe

Verdi, performed

by Franco Bonisoli;

"Ka Lae O Makahonu"

by Kenneth

Makuakane, Frank

P. Kahala, performed

by The Pandanus Club;

"Hawaii Kua Uli,"

"Waikiki Beach" by A.

Angels, H. Hougassian,

performed by Harry

Kalapana; "Happy

Talk," "Bali Hai"

by Richard Rodgers,

Oscar Hammerstein II,

performed by Peter

Boyle; "Hilo March"

by J.K. Ae'a, performed

by Hui Ohana,

Jerry Byrd

Costume Design

Julie Weiss

Costume Supervisors

Nancy McArdle

Bruce Erickson

Costumer

Ruby K. Manis

Make-up Artists

Cheri Minns

John Elliott

Title Design

Wayne Fitzgerald

Supervising Sound Editor

Michael Kirchberger

Sound Editors

Dialogue:

Neil L. Kaufman

Bitty O'Sullivan Smith

ADR Editors

Harriet Fidlou Winn

Jane McCulley

Foley Editor

Dan Korintus

Sound Recordists

David MacMillan

Music:

Tim Boyle

Foley Recordist

Mel Zelniker

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Tom Fleischman

Steve Maslow

Robert Beemer

Sound Effects Editor

Paul P. Soucek

Sound Effects

Andy Aaron

Foley Artists

Elisha Birnbaum

Brian Vancho

Stunt Co-ordinator

Rick Barker

Skydiving Co-ordinator

Mark Miscevic

Stunts

Rick Barker

Brad Bovee

Ann Chatterton

Danny Costa

Greg Dandridge

Chris Howell

Lamont Jackson

Rob Johnson

Stan Parks

Thomas Rosales

Debbie Lynn Ross

Kenny Searle

Skydiving:

D. Mark Miscevic

Jim Bozarth

Michael Brophy

Ray Cottingham

Roger Foster

George Head

Michael C. Hurren

David H. Roberts

Dave Stouard

Kirk Bastian

Brad Brophy

Tom Cannarozzo

Jim Fonesbeck

Mark W. Gillespie

Pat Hemenway

Rick Moffett

Kelly Smith

Allen Turner

PIlots

Howard Bohl

DC-3:

Skip Evans

Helicopter:

John Sarviss

Cast

James Caan

Tommy Korman

Nicolas Cage

Jack Singer

Sarah Jessica Parker

Betsy Nolan/Donna

Pat Morita

Mahi

Johnny Williams

Johnny Sandwich

John Capodice

Sally Molars

Robert Costanzo

Sidney Tomashofsky

Anne Bancroft

Bea Singer

Peter Boyle

Chief Orman

Barton Gilliam

Roy

Brent Hinkley

Vern

Dean Hall

Lyle

Seymour Cassel

Tony Cataracts

Jerry Tarkanian

Sid Feder

</

Jit

Zimbabwe 1990

Director: Michael Raeburn

Certificates

Not yet issued

Distributor

ICA

Production Company

FilmAfrica

Mukuvisi Films

Executive Producers

Neil Dunn

Michael Raeburn

Producer

Rory Kilalea

Production Executive

Bob Matheson

Location Manager

Paul Fisher

Costing

Paul Tingay

Assistant Directors

Joel Phiri

Farai Sevenzo

Screenplay

Michael Raeburn

Director of Photography

Joao (Funcho) Costa

Camera Operator

John Rider

Editor

Justin Krish

Production Designer

Lindie Pankiv

Music

Oliver Mtshudzi

Music Performed by

Tobias Areketa

Robson Banda

Bhundu Boys

Four Brothers

Comrade Chinx

John Chibadura

Southern Freeway

Ilanga

Safirio Midzakatire

Lovemore Majaivana

Zexie Manatsa

Mandebru

Susan Mapfumo

Thomas Mapfumo

Paul Matavire

Oliver Mtshudzi

Runn Family

Solomon Skuza

Songs

"Mhondoro" by

Thomas Mapfumo;

"Muchongoyo" by

Peter Muparutsa;

"Right Direction",

"What's Going On", "I

Wanna Know", "Under

Pressure" by Oliver

Mtshudzi; "Panto

Pamusha" by Brooks

Mupawanda; "Roger"

by Dick Chingaira;

"First Aid", "Katarina"

by S. Madzikatire;

"Vakapare" by

B. Tembo; "Nhai

Mukoma" by B. Tembo,

F. Kaunda; "True Love"

by Busi Ncube;

"Nyimbo Yakwasu"

by R. Banda;

"Dynamos" by Zexie

Manatsa; "Umoya

Wami" by L. Majaivana;

"Makhumalo No 2" by

S. Skuza; "Ziva Rekufa

Kwangu" by

J. Chibadura;

"Umfanyana" by

Don Gumbo; "Going

Home" by Choir of

Church Central Africa

- Mbare; "Sialonda" by

Busi Ncube; "Spoke of

the Wheel", "Once Upon

a Time", "Ba" by Steve

Dyer; "Uya Iwe"

by T. Areketa

Costume Designer

Lindie Pankiv

Make-up

Susan Hains

Sound Recordist

Esko Metsola

Dolby stereo

Cast

Dominic Makuvachuma

UK

Sibongile Nene

Sofi

Farai Sevenzo

Johnson

Wimbo Mawera

Jukwa

Oliver Mtshudzi

Oliver

Lawrence Simharasha

Chamba

Katroy Kuleya

Nomsa

Jackie Esson

Gift

Cecil Zilla Mamani

Police Neighbour

Zanaga Fatshumud

Oliver's Wife

Taffy Marichidza

Hotel Manager

James Mugwena

Taxi Driver

Fidelis Chaza

Barman

Emmanuel Boro

Worker

Shoyai Chikombah

Bertha S. Mawera

Travellers

John Chilo

Taxi Driver

David Chiganzu

Eliot

Emmerson Chikakutira

Golf Club Manager

Aaron Nkomo

Mini Football Player

Alfred Chikanda

Parker

John Two Soe

Boggar

Tarcisious Samyila

Water

Simpson Kovora

Emergency Taxi Driver

Barbara Nhala

Chamba's Wife

Herville Gombah

Rudi Mamapoto

Gang Members

Elias Mhonyadzwo

Slideca: Driver

Kumbukani Phire

Justice Chipero

Brian Mazani

Takomere Chikumbiriro

Patience Munjere

Tendayi Nyakanyanga

Melody Bizach

George Chirena

George Lasa

Phungwa Tembo

Rusty Erasmus

Children

Brian Cooper

Bakery Boss

D. Noyd

Furniture Salesman

Taffy Chilo

Auto Exhaust Manager

Jane Nhala

Housewife

8,280 foot

92 minutes

UK, a country boy, lives in Harare, Zimbabwe, with his uncle Oliver. He's there to make his way in the world, but his idea of a career is cycling around delivering copies of his uncle's latest record to local bars - that is, when he's not battling with his ancestor spirit the Jukwa, a beer-loving old ghost-woman, who only cares to look after him when he's providing the libations.

Sofi works answering phones at Prime Records, the company Oliver is signed to, and goes out with the smooth, monied Johnson. When UK falls out of a taxi and hits his head, he comes round to find a concerned Sofi leaning over him: instantly smitten, he decides to marry her, but Sofi's cheerful gambler father Mr Chamba will allow the marriage only if UK can raise his desired bride price of a hi-fi and 500 dollars in cash UK sets to, taking on a variety of unpromising get-rich-quick jobs, but they're mostly disastrous: he keeps getting fired, and when he's finally able to stump up the bride price, Chamba gambles the money away, and then demands a refrigerator as well, insisting it will help sway Sofi.

It's clear that all this is happening because UK is not attending to his Jukwa's welfare, so she in turn is neglecting him. When he buys her a whole crate of beer, things start to go right. His jobs don't improve - flower pedlar, one-man bus service - but his general likeability and earnest endeavour get people helping him. His mooning around Sofi annoys Johnson, who begins to show his true criminal colours. After a showdown, Johnson's sidekick Gift makes a bogus offer to help UK get the better of Gift's boss - a trick to get UK ensnared in a robbery he didn't commit. But when the fridge arrives at the Chamba household, Gift is found inside it, bound and gagged, and the police arrive, tipped off by UK, to arrest a protesting Johnson. Reluctant at first, then enthusiastic, Sofi embraces her husband-to-be.

In the classic fairy-tale, the poor boy has to perform some task to win the hand of the princess. Sometimes the king's all for it, sometimes the plot hinges on his jealousy. *Jit*, which in all other respects has few pretensions to avant-garde status, gets its spin from Sofi's father. He loves the goofy notion that UK - who's hopeless, except that everyone loves him - might win his hyper-haughty daughter's hand; but he really does want that money, those appliances.

Billed as Zimbabwe's first feature film, *Jit* is so engagingly simplistic - its plot *Boy-Meets-Girl-And-Gets-Girl-The-End* - and so uncomplicatedly engaging that it would be easy to miss its shrewdness. The characters are all the stuff of light comedy - even the criminals are entirely unthreatening, hardly more than truculently impolite. *Jit* certainly makes the best of slim resources, with untried and enthusiastic amateurs for cast, and the Harare citizenry going about their business unconcerned as the backdrop in many shots. Special effects? Jump cuts - and the Jukwa magically appears.

Director Michael Raeburn insists he's very much aware of the challenges and pitfalls facing a non-African filming African city life in Africa (he cites Nabokov in America as proof that something worthwhile can result from outsiders storytelling in a country not their own - which is perhaps not the analogy that springs to mind as you watch, but he has a point). How much the look of the film is down to him and how much down to his host country, which provided crew and actors, would be hard to say. Certainly the cut of his clothes, for extras and stars (Dominic Makuvachuma, with his grin and simpleton artlessness, is nothing if not a star) has the thrift-store realism look of early 70s British cinema: the 16mm filming only emphasises that. *Jit* hasn't had the *vérité* storyboarded out of it; you feel the actors turned up for the shoot in what they'd be wear-

ing anyway. Sofi's elaborate going-out hairdo, for example - just suddenly there before our eyes, an unsignalled detail - might be Sibongile Nene's own favoured hairdo, pure uncalculated serendipity.

At the same time, the film acts as a kind of video showcase for the country's front-rank pop groups. Sound-track music is an almost constant primary-colour pulse-lilt, dropping back behind dialogue only a little - and plenty of the action actually takes place in bars with bands playing in real time. Oliver Mtshudzi's participation is probably a coup for them, as probably the second top figure in ZimPop (which is known as *jit*, from two similar Shona words, one meaning 'dance in a circle', the other 'jump up and down' - the Bhundu Boys brought it to these shores five or six years ago, although they don't appear in the film). The first song you hear is Thomas Mapfumo's 'Mhondoro' - Mapfumo being the top figure in ZimPop, Zimbabwe's own Bob Marley and creator of a sound more distinctly indigenous than the frankly Brit beat-group-derived rock 'n' roll of *jit ordinaire*. It may be that this factor more than any other made it a hit in Zimbabwe itself.

The music's fine; especially if we don't have the language, it has a power which we're drawn to, an innocence, Beatlish and unspoiled - probably deceptively. But the bottom line of this fairy tale is money. The realist aspect of *Jit*'s magical realism goes beyond the Jukwa's alcoholic bent: she disapproves of UK's crush, thinks marrying for love is stupid. African sorcery is thoroughly unromantic, a practical and business-like affair. UK is so called because his schoolmates thought he'd go far; Johnson seeks to persuade Sofi by offering her a real trip to London; she scoffs, not in thrall to higher thoughts (true love over mere baubles), but because he's never yet taken her anywhere.

There is a welcome bonus in the film's quite unnecessary willingness to make its cartoon figures more than just one-dimensional. UK as bread delivery-man is straight Benny Hill, in a speeded-up series of bewhiskered but very funny slapstick sight gags; but the speech he gives earlier to persuade the baker to hire him (about a bike's unpricy flexibility in city traffic) persuades us too. It's a neat little surprise when it turns out to be pure bullshit. There's UK's unfazed decision to propose to Sofi while she's picking out supertime chickens. There's her father's unmasked glee at UK's beating out his richer rival (the denouement is really no more than a fairy godmother flourish, to say the play's ended). There's Sofi's own girl-talk scenes with her best friends, her Tracy Chapman poster pin-up, her modern-girl suspicion and reluctance ("Getting the bride price is not the same as getting the bride," she warns before the closing clinch). These are all serendipity - not of acting, not even of observation especially, just of a story running pleasantly against the grain.

Mark Sinker



Benny Hill in Harare: Dominic Makuvachuma

The Last Days of Chez Nous

Australia 1990

Director: Gillian Armstrong

Certificate

15

Distributor

Metro Pictures

Production Company

Jan Chapman Productions
Developed with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission/Australian Broadcasting Corporation
Made with the participation of the Australian Film Finance Corporation

Producer

Jan Chapman

Associate Producer

Mark Turnbull

Production Co-ordinator

Rowena Talacko

Production Manager

Fiona McConaghy

Location Manager

Peter Lawless

Post-production Supervisor

Rosemary Dority

Casting

Liz Mullinar

Consultants

Europe:

Marilyn Johnson

Laura Scott

Assistant Directors

Mark Turnbull

PJ Voeten

John Martin

Screenplay

Helen Garner

Director of Photography

Geoffrey Simpson

In colour

Camera Operator

Geoffrey Simpson

Steadicam Operator

Ian Jones

Editor

Nicholas Beauman

Production Designer

Janet Patterson

Art Director

Catherine Silm

Set Decorator

Kerrie Brown

Music

Paul Grabowsky

Music Performed by

The Strings of the Melbourne Symphony

Orchestra

Alto Sax:

Ian Chaplin

Guitar:

Doug DeVries

Piano:

Paul Grabowsky

Harpsichord:

Michael Harvey

Tenor Sax:

Günther Klatt

Violin:

Rudolf Osadnick

Flugelhorn:

Bobby Venier

Harmonica:

Steve Williams

Music Producer

Michael Grabowsky

Songs

"The Loved One"

by Lovett, Clyde,

Humphrey, performed

by The Loved Ones;

"Donna Lee" by Charlie

Parker, performed

by The Groovematics;

"Lover Man"

by Ramirez,

Davis, Sherman;

"N'walewana"

by and performed

by Pierre Akendengue;

"Nostalgia" by and

performed by Yanni

Costume Design

Janet Patterson

Costume Supervisor

Louise Wakefield

Make-up Artist

Lesley Vanderwalt

Title Design

Belinda Bennetts

Opticals

Roger Cowland

Ken Phelan

Supervising Sound Editor

Karin Whittington

Sound Editor

Dialogue:

Tim Jordan

Sound Recordists

Ben Osno

Gethin Creagh

Foley:

Steve Burgess

Music:

Robin Grey

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Simon Hewitt

Foley Artist

Gerry Long

Cast

Lisa Harrow

Beth

Bramo Ganz

JP

Kerry Fox

Vicki

Miranda Otto

Annie

Kiri Paramore

Tim

Bill Hunter

Beth's Father

Lex Marinos

Angelo

Mickey Camilleri

Sally

Lynne Murphy

Beth's Mother

Claire Haywood

Janet

Leanne Bundy

Susie

Wilson Alcorn

Cafe Dero

Tom Weaver

Thief

Bill Brady

Mayor

Eva di Cesare

Waitress

Donny Carrelli

Waiter

Olga Sanderson

Singing Woman

Joyce Hopwood

Clinic Nurse

Steve Cox

Stranger

Harry Griffiths

Old Man Desert Tourist

Amanda Martin

Desert Waitress

8,713 feet

97 minutes



Eyes on the prize: Kerry Fox

Sydney. Late one summer, Vicki, an impetuous drifter, returns from her travels in Italy to stay with her elder sister Beth, a novelist, her French husband J.P. and teenage daughter Annie. There is much celebrating, but the relationship of Beth and J.P. - lovers who married only so that J.P. could stay in the country - is on a fragile footing. Beth voices her concerns to her best friend Sally. The two muse on a spire that Beth can see from her porch; Beth explains that she has never found its base. Much to J.P.'s disgust, Vicki lazes about at home, not apparently very intent on finding a job; but Vicki would also like to be a writer and is encouraged by Beth. Beth takes in a lodger, Tim, to help pay the bills. Vicki confides to Beth that she thinks she is pregnant. Meanwhile the household goes to visit Beth and Vicki's parents, and Beth arranges with her father to go on a short holiday. At home, relations between Beth and J.P. deteriorate, while Vicki's pregnancy test proves positive. Beth accompanies Vicki to the abortion clinic where she is mistaken for her mother. Later Beth and J.P. go to visit their friends Sally and Angelo who have just had a baby, and J.P. cradles the child. Beth and her father go on their trip to the outback, but start to argue as soon as they hit the road.

Back at Beth's house 'Chez Nous', the atmosphere is more playful as Vicki and Annie run riot. While watching a documentary about birth, Vicki breaks down, and is comforted by J.P., who tells her she should have told him about the pregnancy as he would happily have adopted the child; later they sleep with each other. Meanwhile, Annie and Tim get together. Out in the desert, Beth and her father resolve their differences. When Beth returns she finds that things have changed at 'Chez Nous'. J.P. finally becomes an Australian citizen, and tells Beth of his affair with Vicki. Beth declares that she never wants to see Vicki again, and

Vicki and J.P. move out of 'Chez Nous'. Sitting on her porch and contemplating these traumatic events, Beth catches sight of the mystery spire, and strides off in search of its base.

Following an unhappy sortie to Hollywood for the now-buried Greta Scacchi/Jimmy Smits romance *Fires Within*, Gillian Armstrong returns to home territory - in more ways than one - to direct this poignantly observed and dry-humoured account of emotional blundering and bruising, from an original screenplay by novelist Helen Garner, who scripted Jane Campion's first featurette *Two Friends*. It makes a fine companion piece to Armstrong's last Australian-set feature *High Tide*, which also dealt with a shifting and perplexing nexus of female relationships in a fragmented family.

In both films, the setting tempers the story in an almost organic fashion. In *High Tide* the mood was shadowed by the bleak coastal trailer-park setting, while the focus of *The Last Days of Chez Nous* is a seemingly inviting open house, ramshackle and bohemian, cluttered with and held together by bric-a-brac and mementoes - a treasure trove to be ransacked. It is a home with its fair share of delights, and different types of play run throughout the film: people draw, paint faces, practice bubbling Jelly Roll Morton standards on the old upright piano, or dance about with pots and pans on their heads. Vicki and Annie even plunder Beth's wardrobe while she is away and toy with its contents as if they were castoffs in a kindergarten dressing-up box.

The atmosphere in *The Last Days* is ostensibly that of a balmy late summer with the sky washed flamingo pink (the film is evocatively lit and photographed by Geoffrey Simpson). It turns thunderously close, however, after the arrival of Vicki, a flame-haired lightning bolt with a gawky sensuality about her. Brilliantly played by

Kerry Fox - from Jane Campion's *An Angel At My Table* - who is emerging as one of the key actresses of her generation, Vicki is an intense and wilful young woman testing the boundaries of that will, while her elder sister is hitting a moment of self-doubt. Sauntering into a dusk-lit empty house at the beginning of the film, Vicki immediately proves impetuous and destructive as she lunges at a pinkiced heart-shaped cake that has been prepared for her homecoming, and cuts a slice for herself. It is symbolic of her greedy desire, a hunger that makes her careless of others.

In this way food and meals play a significant part in the film, revealing much about the characters and their particular tragedies. Beth mirrors Vicki's impulsive act when she carves herself a wedge of J.P.'s special brie, which is not yet ripe; J.P. castigates her, precipitating another row. Later, when Beth and her father are on the road, an argument brews as Dad struggles to open a crisp packet and obstinately refuses to heed his daughter's constructive advice. Food brings people together, but also tears them apart.

Armstrong and Garner are attentive to the mundane nature of relationships that can be built on or, conversely, collapse over the smallest of details. The film is composed of snatches of dialogue and gestures that betray much more than is apparent, as when Beth, lying in bed with J.P., tells him, "Your skin is cold"; he is indeed dying away from her. There is a sense of loss in Beth's life which is not so much exacerbated as disclosed by the arrival of her younger sister. "She is your mirror, your little echo," comments J.P. of Vicki. The relationship between the two sisters, however, is better described as vampiric and sadly destructive. Vicki is encouraged to be a writer by Beth, but finds that her sister steals her lines, while she retorts to Beth on the discovery of her affair with J.P., "am I always to stand back and not take things just because they are yours?" Beth's relationship with J.P. may have been everything to her, while it is suggested that Vicki may only be looking for a momentary experience with him. The new couple move into an uncluttered but sombre house, their relationship already ill-fated by a misunderstanding.

If *The Last Days of Chez Nous* is about the fatal collapse of a household, it also tells how Beth salvages a sense of herself in the process. She finally begins to reach an understanding with her father: the scenes between Beth and her curmudgeonly dad have a raw honesty to them, as Dad is made to realise that his 41-year-old daughter is no longer a child to destroy with his vinegary admonitions. With this afflicted relationship on the mend, Beth can find some real hope to build the future on. She goes in search of the base of her dreaming spire in the knowledge that has found a sure foundation for herself - bricks and mortar, not bric-a-brac.

Lizzie Francke

Leon The Pig Farmer

United Kingdom 1992

Directors: Vadim Jean, Gary Sinyor

Certificate
15

Distributor
Electric Pictures
Production Company
Leon the Pig Farmer plc

Executive Producer
Paul Brooks

Co-Executive Producers
David Altschuler
Howard Kitchner
Stephen Margolis

Producers
Gary Sinyor
Vadim Jean

Associate Producer
Simon Scotland

Production Co-ordinator
Lisa Farbey

Production Manager
Simon Hardy

Location Manager
Ian R. Sharples

Assistant Directors
Richard Lingard
Matthew Scudamore
Alison Begg

Screenplay
Gary Sinyor

Director of Photography
Gordon Hickie

Camera Operator
Simon Maggs

Steadicam Operator
Andy Shuttleworth

Editor
Ewa J. Lind

Production Designer
Simon Hicks

Art Director
James Helps

Music
John Murphy
David Hughes

Music Extracts
"Messiah" by George Frideric Handel

Music Performed by
Thomas Lang
John Murphy
David Hughes
Martin Greene
Malcolm Melling
Andrew Redhead
Peter Whitfield
Mandy Dillon

Music Producers
John Murphy
David Hughes

Songs
"Nothing Ever Goes to Plan", "Man Around", "I Fell in Love With the Moon", "Jimmy Out of Your Skin", "Lena's Theme" by John Murphy, David Hughes; "Feels So Right" by Hughes, Jones, Murphy; "Feelings" by Maurice Albert, Louis Grass; "Mon Dieu" by Michel Vauclair, Charles Dumont; "Simon Tov", "Asher Bara", "Hava Nagila Hava" performed by The Ray McVay Band

Costume Design
Justine Luxton

Wardrobe Supervisor
Heather Joiner

Make-up
Design:
Pebbles
Artist:
Mariska Vennema

Supervising Sound Editor
Danny Hambrook

Sound Editors
Danny Hambrook
Sarah Morton

ADR Editor
Laurie McDowell

Sound Recordists
Paul Hamblin
Stuart Wilson
Music: Keith Andrews
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recorder
Danny Hambrook

Sound Effects
Stuart Wilson

Stunt Co-ordinator
Helen Caldwell

Stunts
Tom Lucy

Cast
Mark Frankel
Leon Geller
Janet Suzman
Judith Geller
Brian Glover
Brian Chadwick
Connie Booth
Yvonne Chadwick
David De Keyser
Sidney Geller
Maryam D'Abo
Madeleine
Gina Bellman
Lisa
Vincenzo Ricotta
Elliot Cohen
Jean Anderson
Mrs Samuels
John Woodvine
Vitelli
Annette Crosbie
Doctor Johnson
Stephen Gelf
Doctor in Restaurant
Neil Mullarky
Waiter in French Restaurant
Burt Kwouk
Art Collector
Sean Pertwee
Keith Chadwick
Barry Stanton
Peter The Vet
Bernard Bresslaw
Rabbi Hartmann
Peter Whitman
Rabbi Jobson
Jack Raymond
Gordon
Claudia Morris
Lawyer
Neal Foster
Howard Kitchner
David Altschuler
Estate Agents
Howard Attfield
Plaintiff
Stanley Davis
Gutterman
Cyril Varley
Mr Goldman
Frank Lee
Mr Samuels
Thelma Ruby
Mrs Bernstein
Robbie Gringras
Harvey Geller
Danny Scheinman
Nat Geller
Edward Halstead
Uncle Benny
Lesley Rubenson
Uncle Ernest
Stan Pretty
Uncle Louis
Rachel Fielding
Bowling Alley Blonde
Paul Simpkin
Lift Operator
Edward Denith
Old Man
Lois Pensoa
Old Woman
Francesca Hall
Medical Centre
Receptionist
Oliver Panto
Morris

Ted Valentine
John Guerrasio
Jimmy's Men
Ruth Posner
Jimmy's Woman
David Graham
The Chef
Martine Ritchie
Sara Mansfield
Naked Cellists
Fiz Marcus
Mrs Gutterman
Hana Maria Pravda
Jewish Woman in Restaurant
Gordon Reid
Jewish Man in Restaurant
The Ray McVay Band
Band at Wedding
Michael Normand
Claire Sinyor
Guests at Wedding
Steve Kenis
Uncle
Reuben Anderson
Little Boy
Maria Altschuler
Little Girl
Steve Rubio
Rabbi Fink
Gary Ellis
Groom
Ray Boot
Photographer
Simon Phillips
Alan Gilchrist
Kim Hicks
Artists in Gallery
Shepherd
Tricia Sawczyn
Keith's Mother Beryl

Rodney Webb
Beryl Husband's Terry
David Ash
Brian's Brother Morgan
June Smith
Yvonne's Sister Jane
Peter Sampson
June's Ex-husband and Fiance John
Virginia Scott
Brian's 2nd Ex-Wife
Cynthia
John Phillips
Cynthia's Boyfriend
Trevor
Pamela Hutchisson
Keith's Girlfriend
Cathy
Daniel Rothchild
Cathy's Teenage
Son Luke
Martin Poole
XP Van Driver
Matthew Salisbury
Motorist at Service Arms
Sarah Shackleton
Cashier
Matthew Collins
Hitch-hiker
Stephen Savage
Jeremy
Simon Katz
Violinist
Robert Harley
Piano Delivery Man
Diana Eskoll
Girl Outside Restaurant

9,339 feet
104 minutes

Leon Geller, a young Jewish estate agent from North London, resigns after a series of bad turns convinces him he is too conscientious for the profession: his colleague Elliot Cohen closes a deal that Leon has been working on, and an Italian speculator is planning to turn Charles Dickens' house into a leisure centre. Taking a temporary job with his mother's catering firm, he discovers while delivering to a fertility clinic that he was conceived by artificial insemination. Leon is further disturbed by the suggestion that his father's low sperm count might be hereditary, and returns to the clinic for tests. Anxiously driving away, he knocks down a pedestrian, Madeleine. Attracted to Leon, she asks him to take her home, where she shows him her art: erotic stained-glass windows. Leon impresses her by telling her he sculpts. While out at dinner, Madeleine, a well-bred Gentile, is further excited to learn that Leon is Jewish, and seduces him. Back at work, at a wedding where his mother is catering, he bumps into Lisa, a Jewish neighbour he has long courted in vain; this time they sleep together.

Leon returns to the clinic and learns that his sperm count is fine. However, at the time of his conception his father's sperm was mixed up with that of Yorkshire pig farmer Brian Chadwick, Leon's 'biological' father. Told the news, Leon's distressed father can offer no sympathy; nor can Madeleine who, feeling - despite Judaism's rule about descent via the mother - that Leon is not properly Jewish (nor, she discovers, a sculptor), no longer wants to see him, and has taken up with Elliot. Lisa, aloof once more, is too busy to offer any comfort. Leon drives to Yorkshire, tells his story to the Chadwicks' extended family and is warmly welcomed. Pig farm-

ing, however, is not his metier, and his first morning's work ends prematurely when he faints. The Chadwicks try to make him feel at home, cooking Jewish food and adopting stock Jewish phrases and gestures. Leon's stay ends in disaster when it emerges that he confused test tubes when helping the local vet, causing a sow to be inseminated with sheep sperm; a hybrid is the result.

After a pair of rabbis judge that the hybrid is possibly kosher, Leon returns to London, with the creature in a holdall. The Chadwicks follow; over drinks at the Gellers, each couple plays at the other's culture and debates over Leon's future. Leon escapes into the countryside taking the hybrid with him, and is followed by the four. Leon sets the creature free and the party, in better spirits, repairs to London and the local Jewish restaurant. From within, Leon sees Lisa, her face against the restaurant window. He runs out, catches up with her, and they kiss.

Billed as the first of its type, a British-Jewish film comedy, *Leon The Pig Farmer* aspires to cover classic Jewish-American ground. Indeed, the Chadwicks consult Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* and use it as a primer, when attempting to make Leon feel at home. Early on, the territory is signposted: conscience-stricken, in thrall to a seemingly inaccessible woman and subjected to the verbal incontinence of his family, Leon is the very model of a Jewish hero. The trouble is that the film never moves beyond dot-by-dot cultural delineation. The crudeness in characterisation is underlined when the Chadwicks' adopted Jewish routine proves not that different from the routines the 'real' Jewish characters have been doing throughout the film. The Gentiles too are flagrant types. Madeleine, the libidinous artist hooked on the 'exotic' ("Compared to Jews, other men seem like dead meat"), expresses her free-thinking ways by hating estate agents and not wearing knickers.

With cracks this stale and oppositions thus contrived, the signals of *chutzpah* - Janet Suzman does an energetic, nagging mother complete with windmilling arms - remain empty gestures. Nor is there any injection of pace from the stolid filming which, for what is the feature debut of the young production/direction team of Jean and Sinyor, shows precious little pleasure in the process.

As Leon, Mark Frankel (also a feature debutant) rarely shifts from playing bemused, which creates something of a disjunction. Is he not meant to be beset by swirling emotions? Perhaps the film's remorseless stylistic tic is designed as compensation; this dramatises Leon's internal conflicts by having his own misgivings voiced by friends and strangers who stop him in the street. The advice comes from so many angles that one forgets Leon is supposed to be especially neurotic and instead marvels at how efficient the grapevine is in Golders Green.

With no narrative drive offered by Leon's ventures, the film is shaped by the principle of racing from one scene of would-be cultural clash to the next, with links as perfunctory as those in a pornographic film intent on reaching its next set-piece. Here the set-pieces demand hammy acting, with some amusingly grotesque results: notably when Brian Glover's Chadwick makes a cabaret of his attempts to shift his sodden Yorkshire accent into a Yiddish swing. A resolution of sorts does come about when the hybrid appears, or rather, doesn't appear: we see it only as a bulge in a holdall - one failing that the small budget (£160,000) can excuse. For reasons not immediately obvious, Leon begins to take control and even gets the girl. It is possible that herein lies a message: so inspired is he by the wonders of the pig-sheep that he realises the advantages of his own 'cross-breeding'. As a guide to the strength of the film's insights into culture and identity, a bulge in a holdall is just about apt.

Robert Yates



Stereotype, schmereotype: Bresslaw, Frankel, Whitman

Lorenzo's Oil

USA 1992

Director: George Miller

Certificates

12

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Universal

Executive Producer

Arnold Burk

Producers

Doug Mitchell

George Miller

Associate Producers

Johnny Friedkin

Daphne Paris

Lynn O'Hare

Production Supervisors

Robin Douer

Claudio Mancini

Production Co-ordinators

Ellen Hillers

Cinzia Taffani

Production Managers

Joanna Gollins

Franco Coduti

Unit Production Manager

Chris Brigham

Location Managers

Neri Kyle Tannenbaum

Liz Kerry

Robin K. Hollister

Post-production

Supervisor

Marcus D'Arcy

Casting

John Lyons

Voice: Barbara Harris

Assistant Directors

Steven E. Andrews

Phillip A. Patterson

John Chavanga

Leonard Juma

Screenplay

George Miller

Nick Enright

Director of Photography

John Seale

In colour

Camera Operator

Brian W. Armstrong

Visual Effects Photographer

Matt Butler

Editors

Richard Francis-Bruce

Marcus D'Arcy

Ian Smith

Production Designer

Kristi Zea

Art Directors

Dennis Bradford

Additional:

John Wingrove

Set Decorator

Karen O'Hara

Set Dressers

Edwin Lohrer III

Mia Boccella

Edward E. West

Catherine Stanton

James D. Kempf

Bruno Cesari

Annelise Anchor

Sound Artists

Master:

Eileen Garrigan

Paula Payne

Frika Gray

Nora Cline

Pam Lewis

Leah Blackwood

Cathy Bruce

Vince Borrelli

Kathy Borland

Michele M. Misiri

Mary O'Brien

Special Effects

John D. Milinac

Music Extracts

"La Traviata - Parigi,

O. Cam" by Giuseppe

Verdi, performed

by The Elizabethan

Sydney Orchestra;

"Three Choruses to

the Play, Tsar Feodor

Ivanovich" by Georgy

Sviridov, performed

by Gloria Dei

Cantores; "Symphony

No.5 in C Sharp Minor"

by Gustav Mahler,

performed by Royal

Concertgebouw

Orchestra of

Amsterdam; "Adagio

for Strings" by Samuel

Barber, performed

by City of London

Sinfonia; "Agnus Dei"

by Samuel Barber,

performed by Corydon

Singers; "Norma -

Casta Diva" by

Vincenzo Bellini,

performed by Maria

Callas, The Orchestra

and Chorus of La Scala

Opera House, Milan;

"Norma - Introduction

to Act II" by Vincenzo

Bellini, performed by

Orchestra of La Scala

Opera House, Milan;

"Oboe Concerto in D

Minor" by Alessandro

Marcello, performed by

Malcolm Messiter with

the Guildhall String

Ensemble; "Requiem

Mass - Agnus Dei"

by Giuseppe Verdi,

performed by Vienna

Philharmonic

Orchestra; "L'Elisir

D'Amore - Una Furtiva

Lagrima" by Gaetano

Donizetti, performed

by Orchestra Sinfonica

della RAI di Torino,

Tito Schipa, Orchestra

of La Scala Milan;

"Cello Concerto in

E Minor, Op.85"

by Edward Elgar,

performed by Michaela

Fukacova, Brno State

Philharmonic

Orchestra;

"Andacht/Jodler"

setting by Josef Döller,

performed by The

Vienna Boys

Choir/Wiener

Volksopernorchester;

"Ave Verum Corpus

KV 618" by Wolfgang

Amadeus Mozart,

performed by

Symphonieorchester

des Bayerischen

Rundfunks

Music Supervisor

Christine Woodruff

Songs

"Kijana Mwana Mwali"

by Idylio Cortini,

Roberto Martini,

performed by

Gonda Traditional

Entertainers; "The

Little Drummer Boy"

by Davis, Simeone,

Onorati, performed

by the Daughters

of St Paul

Costume Design

Colleen Atwood

Wardrobe Supervisors

Linda Matthews

David Davenport

Kirsten Heckerman

Make-up Artists

Fabrizio Sforza

David Craig Forrest

Suzy Belcher

Fiona Musselwhite

Body Prosthetics Designer

Tom Hester

Prosthetics Consultant

Rick Baker

Title Design

Artlantis

Titles

Optical & Graphic

Opticals

Roger Cowland

Ken Phelan



Medicine man: Nick Nolte

Sound Design

Lee Smith

Sound Editors

Gareth Vanderhope

Dialogue:

Livia Ruzic

Wayne Pashley

Additional:

Peter Townend

Tim Jordan

ADR Editor

Annette Sheehan

Foley Editors

Steve Burgess

Jerry Long

Sound Recordists

Ben Osma

Additional:

Ian McLoughlin

ADR:

David Jobe

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Roger Savage

ADR:

Bob Deschaine

Additional:

Paul Zydel

Voice Consultant

Nora Dunfee

Dialectician

Bill Dearth

Noise Consultant

Bill Cross

Cast

Nick Nolte

Augusto Odono

Susan Saramon

Michaela Odono

Peter Ustinov

Professor Nikolaus

Kathleen Wilhoite

Deirdre Murphy

Gerry Coleman

Doctor Judalon

Margo Martindale

Wendy Gimble

James Robb

Ellard Muscatine

Ann Hoar

Loretta Muscatine

Maduka Steady

Omouri

Mary Wakis

Comorian Teacher

Don Suddaby

As Himself

Colin Ward

Jake Gimble

La Tanya Richardson

Nurse Ruth

Jennifer Dundas

Nurse Nancy Jo

William Cameron

Pellerman

Becky Ann Baker

Pellerman's Secretary

Mary Pat Gleason

The Librarian

David Shiner

Clown

Ann Dowd

Pediatrician

Peter MacKenzie

Immunosuppression

Doctor

Paul Lazar

Professor Duncan

Laura Linney

Young Teacher

Helen Rudi

Judalon's Nurse

Luis Ruiz

Judalon's Resident

Joyce Reaching

Columnist

Barbara Peltier

Nikolaus's Secretary

Mary Schmidt Campbell

Principal

Michael O'Neill

School Psychologist

William Thurnhurst Jr

Ear Specialist

Ann McDonough

Dietician

Lianne Kreslin

Smiling Nurse

Nicolas Petrov

World Bank Executive

Richard Cordery

Suddaby's Senior

◀ montage of discouraging words on the page. Where there is no scope for such stylistic flourishes, Miller leaves the film open to flashes of incidental humour: the climactic telephone call from the hospital, for instance, is punctuated by Augusto's hopeless attempts to get the hospital orderly to pronounce 'Odone' correctly.

The film's core issue – should Lorenzo's case be at the service of medical science, or should medicine be working for Lorenzo's immediate survival? – is not only voiced by Michaela but also spelt out dramatically in the scene in which Lorenzo, withered from chemotherapy, is wheeled into a crowded lecture theatre and discussed as a case-study. A stray remark during a support group meeting reveals Miller's awareness that this issue resonates with the contemporary quest for a cure for AIDS. The Odone's quest directly parallels the illicit trials of AZT as an HIV-retardant, which suggests that the film could be taken as a contribution to the slowly growing body of AIDS-concern cinema. Hence, no doubt, the film's opening quotation from a Swahili warrior song to the effect that struggle must be celebrated, because life's meaning is in struggle. But a film about a dying AIDS victim would never have attracted backing from Universal, not least because it could not have had the happy ending that *Lorenzo's Oil* has.

The film has little time for the Odone's Catholicism (they are seen in church only at Easter '84, before ALD has been diagnosed) but there's a distinctly religious edge to the choice of choral music for the soundtrack, as there is to the recurrent crane shots that literally rise above the Odone's earthly woes. We know from *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (which led the *Mad Max* trilogy away from macho homoerotics and generic heroics towards a faltering secular spirituality – Max as reluctant Messiah to a tribe of children) that Miller feels a need to celebrate the spiritual dimension of struggle; but the quasi-sanctification of the Odone seems no less imposed from on high than was Messiahdom on Max. Miller is on stronger ground with his central performances, which he trusts to provide the film's emotional continuity across the necessarily episodic narrative. He shot the film in sequence to help the lead actors build their performances and, in the case of Susan Sarandon, is rewarded with an agonisingly vivid account of a woman who progressively blinds herself to everything but her son's survival (Nick Nolte, by comparison, gets bogged down in his Italian-American accent and mannerisms, but is more credible as a 'new man' than in *The Prince of Tides*). The show-stopper, though, is biochemist Don Suddaby, who plays himself as a character out of a vintage Ealing comedy. Suddaby's three short scenes mark the exact points where docu-drama and fiction intersect, and their success is probably the clearest vindication of Miller's risky approach to a real-life subject.

Tony Rayns

Malcolm X

USA 1992

Director: Spike Lee

Certificate 15
Distributor Guild
Production Company 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks
For Largo International
Producers Marvin Worth
Spike Lee
Saudi Arabia: Ahmed Murad
Co-producers Monty Ross
John Kilik
Preston Holmes
Associate Producer Fernando Sulichin
Foreign Production
Co-ordinator Kate Seelye
Production Managers Gabriel Khoury
Nabil El Shazily
Hussam Aly
Rapipe Montosho
Unit Location Manager Brent Owens
Post-production Supervisor Michael Alden
Post-production Co-ordinator Debi Gildin
2nd Unit Director Barry Alexander Brown
Costing Robi Reed
Egypt: Arief Hatata
Assistant Directors Randy Fletcher
H. H. Cooper
Dale Pierce
Samir Seif
Nshavheni Wa Luruli
Peter Thage
Screenplay Arnold Perl
Spike Lee
Based on the book *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* as told to Alex Haley
Directors of Photography Ernest Dickerson
David Golia
In colour
2nd Unit Directors of Photography Arthur Jafa Fielder
George Pattison
Camera Operator Phil Oetiker
Steadicam Operator Ted Churchill
Visual Effects Supervisor Randall Balsmeyer
Editor Barry Alexander Brown
Production Designer Wynn Thomas
Art Directors Tom Warren
Onsi Abou Seif
Set Decorator Ted Glass
Set Dressers William Butler
Robin Koenig
Peter Von Bartheld
Nancy Boytos
Mark Stein
Gary Aharoni
Judy Becker
Shirley Belwood
David A. Benninghoff
Michael Lee Benson
Mary Ann Butler
Dennis Lee Causey
Elizabeth DeLuna
Daniel DiTolla
Deborah A. Dreyer
Jennifer Greenberg
Daniel Brian Kenney
Dan Kirshoff
Michael Leather
Ray Murphy
Jeff Naparstek
Jim Power
Eric Stepper

Mitch Towse
Keith Wall
Michael Weigand
William Wiggins
Travis Wright
Scenic Artists Jeff Glave
Joyce Leipertz
Eva Davy
Virginia Lim
Joyce Kubalak
Ellen M. Doak
June DeCamp
Kevin Golden
Lawrence Casey
Donald Richard Nace
Greg Sullivan
Caryl Loeb
Chris Cumberbatch
Lorenzo Contessa
Gary Jennings
Jack Doepf
Jay Hendrickx
Neil Prince
Rochelle Edelson
Sally Friedman
Ed Garzero
Storyboard Artist Jeff Balsmeyer
Special Effects Steven Kirshoff
Pyrotechnics Drew Jiritano
Music Terence Blanchard
Music Performed by Malcolm X Orchestra
Concert Master: Sanford Allen
Big Band: Leader/Trumpet: Terence Blanchard
John Longo Snr
James Hynes
Alto Saxophone: Jerome Richardson
Jerry Dodgion
Piano: Sir Roland Hanna
Bass: Paul A. Simmons
Tarus Kinch
Drums: "Panama" Francis
Trombone: Britt Woodman
Timothy Williams
Michael Davis
Tenor/Soprano Saxophones: Branford Marsalis
The Boys Choir of Harlem
Music Supervisor Alex Steyermark
Songs "Someday We'll All Be Free" by Donny E. Hathaway, Edward U. Howard, performed by Aretha Franklin;
"Roll 'Em Pete" by Pete Johnson, Joe Turner, performed by Joe Turner; "Flying Home" by Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton, "Stardust" by Hoagy Carmichael, Mitchell Parish, "Hamp's Boggie Woogie" by Milton Buckner, Lionel Hampton, performed by Lionel Hampton;
"My Prayer" by Jimmy Kennedy, Georges Boulanger, performed by The Ink Spots;
"Stairway to the Stars" by Mitchell Parish, Matt Malneck, Frank Signorelli, "Drop Me Off in Harlem" by Duke Ellington, Nick Kenny, "Undecided" by Sid Robin, Charles Shavers, "Chew Chew Chew" by Ella Fitzgerald, Buck Ram, Chick Webb, "Azure" by Duke Ellington, Irving Mills,

performed by Ella Fitzgerald;
"The Honeydripper" by Joe Liggins, performed by Joe Liggins and the Honeydrippers;
"Undecided Blues" by Don Robey, "The Jitters" by Tab Smith, "Feelin' the Bean" by and performed by Count Basie; "Don't Cry Baby" by Jimmy Johnson, Stella Unger, Saul Bernie, performed by Erskine Hawkins;
"Big Stuff" by Leonard Bernstein, performed by Billie Holiday; "I Cover the Waterfront" by John W. Green, Edward Heyman, performed by Miki Howard; "Beans and Cornbread" by F. Clark, F. Moore, performed by Louis Jordan; "Round and Round" by Lou Stallman, Joe Shapiro, performed by Perry Como; "We Shall Overcome" by Zilphia Horton, Guy Carawan, Frank Hamilton, Pete Seeger; "Alabama" by and performed by John Coltrane; "That Lucky Old Sun (Just Rolls Around Heaven)" by Haven Gillespie, Beasley Smith, performed by Ray Charles;
"Arabesque Cookie" by Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, performed by Duke Ellington;
"Shotgun" by Aury DeWalt, performed by Jnr Walker & the All Stars; "Revolution" by and performed by Arrested Development
Choreographer Otis Sallid
Costume Design Ruth E. Carter
Wardrobe Supervisors Jane E. Myers
Paul A. Simmons
Barbara J. Hause
Make-up Marietta A. Carter
Coree Lear
Vincet Callaghan
Linda C. Castillo
A. J. DeFlorio
Alberta Francesco
C. Romania Ford
Diane Ford
Gloria Grant
Arlette Greenfield
Frances A. Kolar
Lanier Long
Craig Lyman
Eva Polywka
Catherine "Kay" Rowland
Rosemarie Zurlo
Title Design Balsmeyer & Everett
Opticals Jerry Siegel
Eastern Optical EFX
Buena Vista Optical
The Effects House Corporation
Supervising Sound Editor Skip Lievsay
Sound Editors Dialogue: Kevin Lee
Magdaline Volaitis
Eugene Gearty
ADR Supervisor Gail Showalter
ADR Editors Marissa Littlefield
Hal Levinson
Foley Editors Frank Kern
Eliza Paley
Steven Visscher

Sound Recordists Rolf Pardula
Music: James Nichols
Major Little
Douglas T. McKean
Sandy Palmer
ADR: David Boulton
Foley: Dominick Tavella
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists Tom Fleischman
Douglas L. Murray
Keith Culbertson
Foley Supervisor: Bruce Pross
Marko Costanzo
Consultants Project: Dr Betty Shabazz
Historical: Paul Lee
Islamic Technical: Jefri Aalmuhammed
Dance: Frank Manning
Stunt Co-ordinator Jeff Ward
Stunts Mike Russo
Pete Bucossi
Ed Ecker
Anthony Paige
Jim McNulty
George Williams
Andrew Bainton
George Strus
Charles Margiotta
Paul Hashagen
Steve Gibbons
Dick Martinson
Janet Paparazzo
Norman Douglas
Howard "Stick" Baines
David Lomax
Stephanie Payton
Dexter Locke
Roy Thomas
Herb Kerr
Shaun Woodyard
Walter Oden
Jalil Lynch
William "Telly" Davis
Sonja Darling
Harold Baines
Mick O'Rourke
Roy Farfel
Chuck Jeffries
Shirley Hacher
Billy Graham
Randy Frazier
Phil Neilson
Darin Oden
Gregg Smrz
Cast Denzel Washington
Malcolm X
Angela Bassett
Betty Shabazz
Albert Hall
Baines
Al Freeman Jr
Elijah Muhammad
Delroy Lindo
West Indian Archie
Spillo Lee
Shorty
Theresa Randle
Laura
Kate Vernon
Sophia
Lanette McKee
Louise Little
Tommy Hollis
Earl Little
James McDaniel
Brother Earl
Ernest Thomas
Sidney
Joan LaBarre
Benjamin 2X
O. L. Duke
Pete
Larry McCoy
Sammy
Maurice Swood
Cadillac
Debi Mazar
Peg
Phyllis Yvonne Stickney
Honey
Scot Anthony Robinson
Daniel
James E. Gaines
Cholly
Joe Seneca
Toomer

Latanya Richardson
Lorraine
Wendell Pierce
Ben Thomas
Michael Guss
William X
Leland Gantt
Wilbur Kinley
Giancarlo Esposito
Thomas Hayer
Leonard Thomas
Leon Davis
Roger Cassevoir Smith
Rudy
Craig Wasson
TV Host
Graham Brown
Dr Payson
Garica Cox
Eva Marie
Kristan Rai Segura
Saudi
Lauren Padick
Lisha
Danielle Fletcher
Attalah
Robinson Frank Adu
Chuck
Alta Mitchell
Sister Robin
Carl Williams
Pete Cooper
John Otavino
Blades
John Roidy
Simmons
Frances Foster
Woman Outside
Audubon Ballroom
Reggie Montgomery
Dick Jones
David Patrick Kelly
Mr Ostrowski
Gary L. Cates
Doctor
Sharon Washington
Augusta
Shirley Stoler
Mrs Swerlin
Oran "Juice" Jones
Hustler
Ricky Gordon
Lionel Hampton
George Lee Miles
Preacher
Raye Dowell
Sister Evelyn Williams
Veronica Webb
Sister Lucille Rosary
Abdul Salaam El Razaac
Fox
Keith Smith
Brother Gene
George Giddell
Mr Holway
James L. Swain
Conductor
Pee Wee Love
Speedy
Lawrence James
Tully
Steve White
Brother Johnson
K. Smith
Roderick
Christopher Rubin
Sophia's Husband
Matthew Harris
Mike Hodge
Zakke Howze
Young Malcolm
Cytia Founketta
Hilda, age 3
Lanette Bess
Hilda, age 8
Benjamin Atwell
Philbert, age 1
Peter Dunn
Philbert, age 6
Dion Smack Jr
Reginald, age 2
Darrell Smith
Elijah Muhammad's
Grandson
Tahesha Scott
Elijah Muhammad's
Granddaughter
Cholea Counts
Cholea Counts
Yvonne, age 6 months
Natalie Clanton
Yvonne, age 1
Jessica Givens
Attalah
Latanya Bigelow
Qubillah, age 3
Martine Jackson
Tamarah Jackson
Jasmine Smith
Ilyasah, age 2 and 3

Valentino Smith
Wilfred, age 4
David Thomas Jr
Wilfred, age 8
Simon Do-Lay
Son of Elijah
Muhammad and
Secretary
Evelyn Williams
Bill Goldberg
The "John"
Jonathan Peck
Phone Voice
Leonard Parker
Jason
Lorris Washington
Mrs Johnson
Dyan Humes
Maid at Open Air
Market
Lizbeth Mackay
White Woman in
Market
Terry Layman
CIA Agent
Mary Alice Smith
School Teacher
Reverend Wyatt T. Walker
Hospital Spokesperson
Hazel Medina
Cashier Person
Wendy E. Taylor
Numbers Woman
Ed Hordley
Joe Louis Announcer
The Late and Great Ralph
Cooper Sr
Radio Announcer
Christian J. Decosta
Passerby
Karen T. Duffy
Sophia's Friend
Walter Jones
Barber's Customer
Marc Phillips
Photographer
Showman Uesha
Hustler at Grand
Central Station
Theresa Ward
Movie Goer
Larry Cherry
Prison Barber
Clifton Ford
Clifton Trow
Rogers Simon
George T. Odom
Barbers
Vincent Moscaritola
Prison Guard
Larry Attile
Guard Baines
Brendan Kelly
Guard Cone
John Grieseomer
Guard Wilkins
Fia Porter
Coed
Billy Mitchell
Kent Jackson
Men
Boatrice Wende
Elderly Woman
Franceswell Hymns
Bartender
Rien Johnson
Shoeshine Boy
Charles Weldon
Mike Hodge
Iris Little
Nyahah Shabazz
Bahai Turpin
Followers at Temple 7
Aaron Blackhear
Niyne Fields
John David Washington
Radi Bascomb
Muhammad Parks
Chinere Parry
Jon Quiles
Shameek Martinez
Students in Harlem
Classroom
Chuck Cooper
Damon Chandler
Shellye D. Broughton
Nicholas Barwell
Sam Dixon
Barbara Smith
Customers
Renee Neal
Earl Whitted
Michael C. Mahon
Addison Cook
Byron Utley
George Rafferty
Maxwell Simovoi
Eric Swirsky
Prisoners

Stewart J. Zilly
Coffee Cakes
Armand Scholtz
Woody Kelly
Janet Zarish
Annie Corley
Stephen James
Steven Ramlazzo
Christopher Skutch
William Swinton
Marcus Naylor
Anthony Necorina
TV Reporters
Garth Williams
Stephen Nanan
Richard Schiff
David Berman
JFK Reporters
Michael Imperioli
Steve Stapsenhorst
Reporters at Fire
Bombing
Arthur French
Lex Monson
Judd Jones
Pullman Porters
C. E. Smith
Fountain Waiter
Erika Smith-Brown
Waitress
Raymond Anthony Thomas
Delliah Picard
Michael Ralph
Crowd Members
Monique Clatton
Jake Ann Jones
Sharon Ferguson
Amelia "Mini" Walker
Neisha Folkes-Le'Melle
Karen Michaels
Lenora Pamberton
Ellie Neal
Felicia Wilson
Yvette Brooks
Hookers
Teresa Yvon Farley
Young Hooker
Kiki Della Vecchia
Teenage Whore
John Sayles
Martin Donagan
FBI Agents
Joy Chabonson
Cop at Audubon
Joe Pontangelo
Mike Farley
Nick Maglia
David Reilly
Mounted Police
Nick Turbano
Boston Cop
James Murtough
William Fichtner
Tim Kelleher
Cops at Harlem Station
Michael Cullon
Desk Sergeant
James MacDonald
Lieutenant
Steve Aronson
Black Legion Leader
Bill Anagnos
Don Hewitt
Jerry Hewitt
Black Legion Members
Joe Filon
Gleny Siverio
Jack McLoughlin
Sham O'Neil
Andy Duppin
Elmer Licciardello
KKK Members
Marti Dillon
Ranton Kirk
DJ's at the Harlem "Y"
Dance
Tim Hutchinson
Andre Blair
Abdul Makoom Hurah
Rory Clanton
Fruit of Islam
Scott Whitehurst
Eric Payne
Ali Abdul Wahab
Terry Hodges
Kavan Gibbs
Dana Hubbard
Malcolm's FOI
David Roberts
Robert Jones
Kevin Rock
Mansoor Hajeonullah
Dino Graham
Zachary Muhammad
Gregory Bergeman
Lee Summers
Rich Gordon
Larry Rushing
Elijah Muhammad's FOI

Moody Blues
MC - Roseland
Eddie Davis
Reggie Pittman
Patrick Rickman
Gerald Brazel
Clack Gaben
Richard Owens
Douglas Parviano
Mark Gross
Cleone Guyton Jr
Jovan Jackson
Lance Bryant
Daniel Lomello
David Fladd
Marcus Louper
Dwayne "Cook" Broadway
Lionel Hampton Band
Miki Howard
Billie Holiday
Terence Blanchard
Bruce David Barth
Rodney Whitaker
William E. Kilson
Billie Holiday Quartet
Sonny Allen
Vanessa Boston
Cheryl Barr
Leslie Dechery
Clisco Drayton
Byron Estey
John Elajaldo
Debra Elkins
Gina Ellis
Sharon Ferguson
John Fouts
Robert H. Fowler III
Ryans Francella
Phillip Gilmore
Jocquette Greene
Wendy King
Jerome Jamal Nardeman
Down Hampton
Monique Marcus
Raymond Harris
Delphine T. Mantz
Bernard Marsh
Greta Martin
Norma Miller
Frances Morgan
John Parks
Greg Poland
Jodyne Hawkins Richard
Eartha Robinson
Michelle Robinson
Traci Robinson
Ken Leigh Rogers
Eddie Sanabria
Eddie Shelman
Lynn Sterling
Kelli Thomas
Debbie Williams
Charles F. Young
Anthony Dowitt
Wendy King
Roseland Dancers
Cynthia Thomas
Shorty's Dance Partner
Sharon Brooks
Laurie Ann Gibson
DJ Tahara Ibrahim
Kelli Lewis
Deborah Whitburn
Skeleton Crew Dancers
Steve Reed
John F. Kennedy
Jodie Farber
Jackie Kennedy
Randy Means
Governor Connally
Columbia Dubose
Nellie Connally
Vincent D'Onofrio
Bill Newman
CBH Codney
Limo Driver
George Marshall Ruge
Secret Service Man
Bobby Seale
Al Sharpton
Speakers
Christopher Plummer
Chaplain Gill
Karen Allen
Miss Dunne
Peter Boyle
Captain Green
William Kanatier
The Judge
Nelson Mandela
As Himself
Ossie Davis
As Himself
16,144 feet
201 minutes

World War II. Malcolm Little and his friend Shorty hustle on the streets of Roxbury, the black section of Boston. In Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925, the Little family home is set alight by a KKK party searching for Malcolm's Baptist minister father. In Nebraska 1931, Minister Little is murdered by the KKK, but his killing is treated as suicide; consequently his wife Louise is not eligible for insurance, and her children are fostered out. Louise goes mad and is put into an asylum.

Malcolm and Shorty meet Sophia, a white woman who becomes Malcolm's lover in preference to Laura, his God-fearing black girlfriend. Malcolm goes to Harlem, where under the name of Detroit Red, he joins a numbers gang run by West Indian Archie. Malcolm cheats Archie out of some money and is chased out of town, narrowly escaping death. In Boston, he is reunited with Shorty and Sophia; their gang pulls a few jobs before being caught, and Malcolm ends up in Charleston State Prison. After a spell in solitary, he meets Baines, a prisoner who introduces him to the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam. Hesitant at first, Malcolm finally embraces the doctrine of Islam as the only way to free himself from the "prison of his mind". He takes the surname X as a rejection of the white slave master's name Little. Malcolm has a 'visitation' - an apparition of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

On leaving prison in 1952 Malcolm is transformed from a street hustler into an eloquent spokesperson for the NOI, and meets Elijah Muhammad, who acts as his mentor. His energy, charm and wit soon bring him to prominence amongst the NOI's ministers and his fiery denunciations of the white race stir the people of Harlem and the world beyond. Meeting up with Shorty again, he asks about the old gang; he learns that Sophia is married and Archie is down and out. Malcolm meets Sister Betty, a Muslim nurse he later marries. On the streets of Harlem, Johnstone, a Muslim minister, is beaten up and arrested by the police; Malcolm marches with a group from the NOI to the police headquarters where they find the injured minister and then to the hospital to check on his condition. They are joined by hundreds of black people.

Recognising Malcolm's power and charisma, Elijah Muhammad makes him his national spokesman. Malcolm becomes a media star, and takes every opportunity to speak of the evils of the white man, the folly of non-violence and the inevitability of racial explosion. Threatened by his preeminence, Baines and others plot his downfall. Meanwhile, two young women in the NOI have filed paternity suites against Elijah Muhammad, saying the 67-year-old fathered their children. On investigation, Malcolm finds out that not only is this true but that Elijah Muhammad is plotting against him, fearful of betrayal.

1963: following Kennedy's assassination, Malcolm X hits the front pages,



"I am Malcolm X": Denzel Washington

saying the president's death is just. Outraged, Elijah Muhammad bans him from speaking for 90 days; returning home, Malcolm hears of a plan to murder him. 1964: having left the NOI, Malcolm establishes Muslim Mosque Incorporated before making a pilgrimage to Mecca, shadowed by FBI and CIA agents. Renamed El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, Malcolm returns home, having rejected his former separatist viewpoint. In the US, attention from the press increases as do the threats on his life from NOI. In 1965 his house is firebombed. A week later Malcolm X is gunned down by NOI assassins as he speaks in Audubon Ballroom.

The sense of wonder that overcomes you after viewing *Malcolm X* is not so much at the film itself, but at the relative ease with which you find yourself sitting through its 201 minutes. This says much for Lee's flair at pacing, less about his ability to produce great cinema, even on a \$34m budget. His visual panache, coupled with Ernest Dickerson's lighting, makes *Malcolm X* a very watchable upmarket biopic that appeals to a film- and MTV-literate audience's ability to absorb a compendium of styles - the choreographed exuberance of the opening dancehall sequences, the noirish construction of the 40s Harlem underworld and, in the African sequences, crowd scenes from the David Lean/Gandhi school of epic.

The film begins powerfully enough, mobilising Lee's flair for ad-campaign polemic, in a title sequence juxtaposing footage of the Rodney King beating with an American flag burning into an X. But Lee leads from there into what looks like another film entirely, a dancehall musical comedy. This is one of many large-scaled tableaux that wash over you until the real story begins with Malcolm's conversion in jail; there the story retreats onto the printed page as Baines teaches him the

meanings of the words 'black' and 'white'. Other memorable moments come in small intense bursts: an allusion to D. W. Griffith as the Klansmen ride off to be engulfed by the full moon; Louise Little isolated in an asylum room; the iconic shot of Malcolm standing armed by the window; and the scenes in solitary confinement, with Malcolm in his dark cell caught between swathes of light.

The film's real low is its portrayal of women (Angela Bassett's Betty Shabazz is sadly underused), with Lee casting little critical light on the NOI's treatment of women; in case we are in any doubt, those outside Islam are shown as prostitutes or lost sheep. It is no coincidence that in his eulogy at the end of the film, Ossie Davis talks about Malcolm X as "our manhood, our living black manhood."

At the film's centre is Denzel Washington's metamorphosis from the zoot-suited Detroit Red to Islamic gravitas; but even his compelling presence is not enough to unify the film's diversity. At times it seems as though Lee has simply lost control of the genres at his disposal, especially when he slips into sentimental-pedagogical mode at the end, with nauseating scenes of 'one world' cuteness (schoolchildren recite "I am Malcolm X", while Nelson Mandela makes a cameo appearance to endorse the project). Audiences will gag - or at least wish that the film had ended ten minutes earlier when still in elegiac mode over Malcolm's death.

This void would be less of a problem if *Malcolm X* hadn't arrived on a wave of expectancy any film would find hard to fill. Lee has always been able to tell a good story, but the question is whether he can tell a complex one - *Do The Right Thing* notwithstanding. Instead of history reimagined, a reflection on the past commenting on our future, we end up with *Malcolm X* as slogan - but do we need another hero?

Karen Alexander

Orlando

United Kingdom/Russia/France/Italy/
Netherlands 1992

Director: Sally Potter

Certificate
PG

Distributor
Electric Pictures

Production Companies
Adventure Pictures
(Orlando) Ltd (London)/
Lenfilm (St Petersburg)/
Rio (Paris)/Mikado Film
(Rome)/Sigma
Filmproductions
(Maarsen)

With the participation
of British Screen
With financial
assistance from
the European
Co-production Fund
(UK)/European Script
Fund

Producer
Christopher Sheppard

Co-producers
Roberto Cicutto
Jean Gontier

Line Producers
Matthijs Van
Heijningen
Laurie Borg

Associate Producers
Luigi Musini
Vitaly Sobolev
Lynn Hanke
Richard Salmon
Martine Kelly

Production Executives
Anna Vronskaya
Linda Bruce

Production Co-ordinators
Jonathan Finn
Harriet Earle
Guurtje Buddenberg
Natalia Tokarskikh

Production Manager
Yury Giotov

Location Manager
Tony Clarkson

Costing
Liubov Vlasenko

Assistant Directors
Michael Zimbrich
Chris Newman
Simon Moseley
Christian McWilliams
Yury Vertlib
Sasha Yurchikov
Gabrielle Vorobiev
Rikhsivoi
Abduvakhidov

Screenplay
Sally Potter

Story Editor
Walter Donohue
Based on the novel
by Virginia Woolf

Director of Photography
Aleksandr Rodionov
In colour

Editor
Herve Schneid

Production Designers
Ben Van Os
Jan Roelfs

Art Directors
Michael Buchanan
Michael Howells
Stanislav Romanovsky
Igor Gulenko

Set Design
Christopher Hobbs

Set Dressers
Constance De Vos
Floris Vos
Rashid Sharafutdinov
Feodor Shokhmedov
R. Majsoyrov

Scenic Artist
Todd Van Hulzen

Special Effects Directors
Yury Borovkov
Viktor Okovitey

Special Effects
Paul Corbould
Effects Associates

Pyrotechnics
Sergei Maslikov

Nikolai Borisov
Aleksandr Pantushin

Music
David Motion
Sally Potter
Additional:
Fred Frith
David Bedford

Music Performed by
Contra-bass Clarinet:
Richard Addison
Violin/Viola:
Alexander Balanescu
Violin:
Clare Connors
Bassoon:
Lindsay Cooper
Clarinets/Sax:
Andy Findon
Guitars:
Fred Frith
Double Bass:
Christopher Laurence
Keyboards:
David Motion
Trumpet/Flugelhorn:
Bruce Nockles
Voices:
Sally Potter
Jimmy Somerville

Music Producers
Bob Last
David Motion

Songs
"Eliza is the Fairest
Queen" by Edward
Johnson, "Coming"
by Sally Potter, Jimmy
Somerville, David
Motion, performed
by Jimmy Somerville;
"Where'er You Walk"
by George Frideric
Handel, performed
by Andrew Watts,
Peter Hayward

Choreographer
Jacky Lansley

Costume Design
Sandy Powell

Costume Supervisor
Paul Minter

Wardrobe
Supervisors:
Claire Spragge
Ludmilla
Romanovskaya
Zibo Nassirova

Make-up
Supervisors:
Morag Ross
Tamara Fried

Hair Supervisor
Jan Archibald

Titles
Frameline
Supervising Sound Editor
Kant Pan

Sound Editor
Dialogue:
Martin Evans

Sound Recordist
Jean-Louis Ducarme
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordist
Robin O'Donoghue

Foley
Martin Robinson

Artists:
Dianne Greaves
Jack Stew
Pauline Bennion

Stunt Co-ordinators
Steve Dent
Oleg Vasilug

Cast
Tilda Swinton
Orlando
Billy Zane
Shelmerdine
John Wood
Archduke Harry
Lorraine Bracco
The Khan

Charlotte Valandrey
Sasha
Heathcote Williams
Nick Greene/Publisher
Quentin Crisp
Queen Elizabeth I
Dudley Sutton
King James I
Thom Hoffman
King William
of Orange
Anna Healy
Euphrosyne
Sara Blair-Thames
Favilla
Anna Farworth
Clorinda
Simon Russell Beale
Earl of Moray
Matthew Sim
Lord Francis Vere
Mary Macleod
Barbara Hicks
Women
Toby Stephens
Othello
Jerome Willis
Translator
Oleg Pogodin
Desdemona
Viktor Stepanov
Russian Ambassador
Aleksandr Medvedev
Russian Sailor
John Bolt
Orlando's Father
Elaine Banham
Orlando's Mother
Kathryn Hunter
Countess

Peter Eyre
Mr Pope
Med Sherrin
Mr Addison
Roger Hammond
Mr Swift
Lol Coxhill
Hugh Mauro
Terence Soall
Butlers
George Vlasconi
Toby Jones
Robert Donaghy
Valets
Thom Osborn
Doctor
Jimmy Somerville
Singer/Angel
Giles Taylor
Singing Valet
Andrew Watts
Courtier Tenor
Peter Hayward
Harpichordist
John Grillo
Martin Wimbush
Officials
Sarah Crowden
Queen Mary
Olivia Lancelotti
Young Woman
Cyril Lecomte
Young Man
Jessica Swinton
Orlando's Daughter
John Byrne
Courtier

8,399 feet
93 minutes

England, 1600. The young aristocrat Orlando and his parents hold a grand banquet for the elderly Queen Elizabeth I at their ancestral home. The Queen proclaims an affection for the handsome Orlando and gives him the deeds of his parents' house. By 1610, the Queen and Orlando's parents have died. Orlando, who is now betrothed to Favilla, attends a celebration held on the frozen River Thames by King James I in honour of visiting royalty from Muscovy. Favilla is humiliated when Orlando falls in love with Sasha, a young Russian princess. They arrange to meet on the frozen river at night, but Sasha does not keep her promise. Heartbroken, Orlando goes into a deep sleep and wakes up in 1650. He decides he wants to write poetry and entertains the scurrilous poet Nick Greene, who is more interested in securing a pension from Orlando than discussing the finer points of his craft.

In the year 1700, Orlando abandons his creative ambitions and turns his attention to politics. He asks William of Orange to send him abroad and ends up as the British ambassador in Central Asia. There he befriends the Khan and happily adopts an Eastern way of life. Ten years later the Archduke Harry is sent out to bestow Orlando with a reward for services to his country. A party is held, but since a war has just broken out in the region, no one turns up. Orlando is caught in the fray, but cannot bring himself to fight. He escapes his duty when he wakes up one day as a woman. 1750: Orlando has returned to England and attends the literary salons. As Lady Orlando, she is informed that she has no rights to the ancestral home. The Archduke offers to marry her and help her out of this predicament, but Orlando refuses.

100 years later, she meets her true knight and equal in the form of

Shelmerdine, a wild adventurer from America. She proposes to him; he turns her down but they live together for a while. Orlando is visited by two of Queen Victoria's officers and told that the lawsuit against her is settled - she must forfeit everything unless she has a son. Shelmerdine decides to return to America, but Orlando resolves to stay in England even though she has now lost her beloved and her inheritance. Time speeds up and Orlando finds herself pregnant in a war-torn twentieth century. She emerges into the present with a young daughter and a completed manuscript, fulfilled at last.

Sally Potter's long awaited adaptation - or, more appropriately, interpretation - of Virginia Woolf's celebrated novel (which was written as a love poem to the flamboyant Vita Sackville-West) charts a journey from one Elizabethan age to another. The mythical Orlando shakes off the fetters of biological and cultural destiny to become - as angelic songster Jimmy Somerville, complete with laurels, wigs and lyre, pipes in the finale - a reinvented being that is "one with the human race". Woolf's creation cannot be easily classified. S/he is not so much an androgyne, rather a person who passes from male status to female over the course of 400 years, finding a first love in the exotic, foreign Sasha which is subsequently reflected and consummated in the adventurer Shelmerdine (Billy Zane may not be able to act but he has a smile at least as bewitching as Charlotte Valandrey's Sasha).

Sexual ambiguity no longer causes the frisson it did when Woolf was writing, so Potter has made the question of status the central point of the film - Orlando learns how a change in gender is equivalent to excommunication. Lady Orlando is faced with two lawsuits, one which pronounces her legally dead and therefore unable to own property, while the other informs her that she is female - "which amounts to the same thing." But this death to the world is a rebirth for Orlando, who surveys her naked female form in the mirror in an echo of Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*. Orlando is never seen naked in his male incarnation - he is never authenticated as a man, rather he remains effeminately boyish. But with Tilda Swinton - in playful mode with frequent nods and

winks to the camera - in the title role, the audience knows that there is a woman underneath those clothes. As a privileged child of the aristocracy, Orlando is in any case feminised by the gorgeous finery of his age. Clothes maketh the society man and woman - and Orlando seems as uncomfortable in the frock-coats and wigs, the doublet and hose of male attire, as in the cumbersome crinolines that hamper her progress through the Great Hall. Only in Eastern robes does Orlando appear to be free - as much from the constraints of Englishness as of gender.

Indeed, *Orlando* is full of jokes about the English, whether it be the custom of talking loudly to foreigners (with knowing wit, this particular exchange is in French) or the imperialist habit of collecting countries. The film is also a romp through English history, which it presents as richly textured spectacle. Potter creates an embroidered style similar to that of Peter Greenaway (whose production designers Ben Van Os and Jan Roelfs she has borrowed) which, together with the Nymansesque score, confirms her place in a particular tradition of British European-influenced art cinema. She also flirts with the attractions of pomp and circumstance. The pageant for Queen Elizabeth I is a visual feast of autumnal russet, red and gold, while the eighteenth-century salon's pastel palette could have been devised by Wedgwood. Details such as the tea-cup shaped topiaries - perfect emblems of the clipped Victorian era - are a delight. A frozen tableau of a woman with flowers and fruit trapped under the ice of the River Thames has a cold beauty - until we realise what is entailed in the creation of that image.

While there are many ironic touches - such as the casting of Quentin Crisp as the Virgin Queen and the twentieth-century salonier Ned Sherrin as Addison - the overlaid visual style perversely turns the film into a celebration of the cultural heritage that Orlando in her liberated female state must reject. In the closing scenes, Orlando, in gentrified jodphurs and jacket, joins the tourists and takes her cherubic daughter around the home that once was hers, but which now they can only look at with wonder. In many ways, this epitomises the experience of viewing *Orlando* itself.

Lizzie Francke



Extended shelf life: Tilda Swinton

Scent Of A Woman

USA 1992

Director: Martin Brest

Certificate

15

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Universal Pictures

Executive Producer

Ronald L. Schwary

Producer

Martin Brest

Associate Producer

G. Mac Brown

Production Associate

David J. Wally

Production Co-ordinator

Harriette Kanew

Unit Production Manager

G. Mac Brown

Location Manager

Andrew D. Cooke

Post-production

Supervisor

Doreen A. Dixon

Casting

Ellen Lewis

Assistant Directors

Douglas S. Ornstein

Maggie Murphy

Screenplay

Bo Goldman

Suggested by a character from *Profumo di Donna* by Ruggero Maccari, Dino Risi

Based on the novel *Il Buio E Il Miele* by Giovanni Arpino

Director of Photography

Donald E. Thorin

Colour

DeLuxe

Camera Operators

Ken Ferris

David Knox

Editors

William Steinkamp

Michael Tronick

Harvey Rosenstock

Production Designer

Angelo Graham

Art Director

W. Steven Graham

Set Decorator

George Detitta Jr

Storyboard Artist

Jeff Balsmeyer

Music

Thomas Newman

Music Editors

Bob Badami

Bill Bernstein

Songs

"Evangeline" by Robbie Robertson, performed by Emmylou Harris;

"El Relicario",

"La Violettera" by Jose Padilla, "Por Una Cabeza" by Carlos Gardel, "Caminito" by Juan de Dios Filiberto, "Vida Mia" by Osvaldo Fresedo, Emilio Fresedo, "Adios Muchachos" by Julio Cesar Sanders, Cesar Felipe Vedani; "El Choclo" by Angel Villoldo, Maramba Catani, "A Media Luz" by Edgardo Donato, Carlos Cesar Lenzi performed by The Tango Project

Choreography

Jerry Mitchell

Paul Pellicoro

Costume Design

Aude Bronson-Howard

Wardrobe

Benjamin Wilson

Melissa Adzima-Stanton

Make-up Artists

Carl Fullerton

Allen Weisinger

Robert Laden

Title Design

Wayne Fitzgerald

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Titles

Supervising Sound Editor

J. Paul Huntsman

Dialogue Editors

Matthew Sawelson

Pat McCormick

Ralph Osborn

Supervising ADR Editor

James Simcik

ADR Editors

Robert Ulrich

Bill Carruth

Devon Curry

Foley Editors

Lucy Coldsnow

Jeff Rosen

Sound Recordists

Danny Michael

Daniel Rosenblum

ADR:

Ann Hadsell

Dubbing:

Rudy Lara

Tony Jenkins

Music:

Andy Bass

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Chris Jenkins

Mark Smith

Doug Hemphill

ADR:

Dean Drabin

Foley:

Eric Gotthelf

Music:

John Vigran

Sound Effects Editors

John Haeny

Myron Nettingo

Foley Artists

Robin Harlan

Sarah Jacobs

Stunt Co-ordinator

Peter McKernan

Stunts

Phil Adams

Danny Aiello III

Dwayne McGee

Don Pulford

Gary Wayton

Janet Paparazzo

Al Goto

Jerry Hewitt

Tom Elliott

Jane McKernan

Michael Haynes

John Macchia

Cast

Al Pacino

Lieutenant Colonel

Frank Slade

Chris O'Donnell

Charlie Simms

James Rebhorn

Mr Trask

Gabrielle Anwar

Donna

Philip S. Hoffman

George Willis Jr

Richard Venture

W. R. Slade

Bradley Whitford

Randy

Rochelle Oliver

Gretchen

Margaret Eginton

Gail

Tom Riis Farrell

Garry

Nicholas Sadler

Harry Havemeyer

Todd Louiso

Trent Potter

Matt Smith

Jimmy Jameson

Gene Canfield
Manny
Frances Conroy
Christine Downes
June Squibb
Mrs Hunsaker
Ron Eldard
Officer Gore
Sally Murphy
Karen Rossi
Michael Santoro
Donny Rossi
Alyson Feldman
Erika Feldman
Francine Rossi
Julian Stein
Max Stein
Willie Rossi
Anh Duong
Sofia
Leonard Gaines
Freddie Bisco
David Lansbury
Michael
Joseph Palmas
Bellhop
Baxter Harris
George Willis Snr

Francie Swift
Flight Attendant
Michel Simon
Oak Room Waiter
William Beckwith
Oak Room Maitre d'
Mansoor Hajeenallah
Skycap
J. T. Cromwell
Ballroom Waiter
Peter Carew
Bootblack
Paul Stocker
Doorman
Michael Lisenco
Cab Driver
Divina Cook
Night Maid
14,091 feet
156 minutes

Promising young student Charlie Simms has won a scholarship to Baird School, with every chance of going on to Harvard. Hoping to earn enough for his plane-fare home to Oregon at Christmas, he responds to a small ad for a weekend job: a Mrs. Rossi needs a 'minder' for her blind father, Lt. Colonel Frank Slade. Their first meeting is inauspicious: Slade is a short-tempered bully, and Charlie is out of his depth. But Mrs. Rossi is desperate, and Charlie reluctantly agrees to look after Slade for Thanksgiving weekend. Back at Baird, Charlie and his friend George Willis happen to glimpse preparations for an elaborate practical joke played on the head teacher, Trask, by a trio of other students. Taking it badly, Trask threatens Charlie and George, known to be witnesses, with expulsion unless they identify the culprits; when they refuse, Trask announces that the entire school will gather after Thanksgiving weekend for an open meeting at which punishment will be agreed for Charlie and George unless they tell what they know.

Charlie is reunited with Slade for Thanksgiving. As soon as the Rossis leave, Slade reveals his plans: he has first-class tickets for New York, where he intends to spend a wild weekend. Charlie protests that he has to be back at Baird to prepare for his 'trial', but soon finds himself in a suite at the Waldorf-Astoria contending with Slade's over-bearing hospitality. Refusing to be handicapped by his blindness, Slade is an ardent talker, womaniser and gourmet, determined to make the most of his escapade. Next day, fitted out in a brand new suit, he heads for the home of his brother Willie, where he becomes an unwelcome extra guest for Thanksgiving dinner and venomously insults all his relatives. His nephew Randy, with whom he picks a fight, reveals to Charlie that Slade's blindness was the result of carelessness with a hand grenade after he had been passed over for promotion. Back at the hotel, Charlie sees Slade cleaning his revolver, and insists on being given all the bullets; intrigued by his concern, Slade begins to take an interest in his impending 'trial'. Downstairs, Slade educates a girl in the steps of the tango

before her fiancé whisks her away. The next morning, Slade is so depressed that Charlie, desperate to cheer him up, suggests a ride in a sports car. They test drive a red Ferrari at hair-raising speeds, with Slade at the wheel, until warned by a traffic cop who fails to notice Slade's blindness. Slade tricks Charlie into leaving him alone with his gun; Charlie returns just in time to argue him out of a suicide attempt. With new respect for his young 'minder', Slade accompanies him back to Baird and, to Charlie's surprise, gate-crashes the meeting to speak in his defence. His eloquence is applauded on all sides, and Charlie is exonerated. Slade allows himself to be driven home, where he greets his grandmother with unaccustomed warmth.

The slapstick partnerships of Martin Brest's two previous adventure comedies (*Beverly Hills Cop* and *Midnight Run*) were set against such absurd backgrounds of rivalry and betrayal that there was no risk they would be taken seriously. Their success lay partly in the two- or three-way struggle for authority between the main characters, partly in their episodic chase-and-shootout structure, and partly in their race-against-time pacing, resulting in a constant breathless exchange of insults and other missiles. For *Scent of a Woman*, Al Pacino has no difficulty in updating the Eddie Murphy role as leading loudmouth and rule-breaker, fast-talking his way through a barrage of invective and sexism and scoring points with malicious glee against those who conform to conventional restraints. A gift of a part, it allows him to be joker, orator, virtuoso, humanist and dirty old man, although not quite the loveable rogue - a quality to which he often aspires and which as often evades him (the mean-spirited Pacino of the *Godfather* films has probably killed off his chances for good in this area). Scrupulously and properly playing blind as if he wasn't, except for a gaze fixed disconcertingly at waist-level, he conveys an affliction more mental than physical, a willful and wholly self-serving eccentricity.

To offset this vituperative loner, another idealist, like Charles Grodin in *Midnight Run*, is introduced; in the form of Chris O'Donnell, the student 'minder' inevitably discovers strengths of character that he (and we) never pre-

viously suspected, and wildly improvises an argument against suicide by resorting to much the same oaths as his tormentor. The transformation is catastrophically unconvincing. Largely submerged under Pacino's tidal-wave performance, O'Donnell has scant chance of keeping the balance, not only out of lack of charisma but also because his entire Baird School background is grossly presented like a series of pranks from *Porky's*.

Brest enjoys the irredeemably villainous, and his underworld characters in the earlier films were pleasurably lampooned, but with Trask he has created an excessively foolish adversary incapable even of recognising the remarkable ingenuity of the trick that is played on him. To try to fashion a Capraesque argument for moral rearmament in opposition to this blustering authoritarian is to destroy even Pacino's efforts to construct a figure of melancholy dignity out of the reformed witness for the defence. The case for Charlie's noble silence accordingly capsizes in a flood of implausibility and contrivance.

Slower of rhythm than Brest usually finds comfortable (a lengthy early tracking shot tries to get the story on the move but leads frustratingly nowhere), *Scent of a Woman* only really comes to life when the Ferrari hits the streets with a blind man at the wheel. Despite its title, the film is no more about women than Brest's other essays in male bonding, in which wives and sweethearts are kept at an unattainable distance, symbolic victims on a man's battleground. Sniffing out any attractions in his vicinity, the blind soldier in *Scent of a Woman* mercifully confines himself to repelling appreciative ribaldry ("There are only two syllables worth hearing: pussy!") except for the one redeeming sequence in which he teaches a youngster how to tango while secretly resigned to the fact that he'll never teach her anything else. In consequence we are left with the hope, however unsubstantiated, that he may in fact have taught her quite a lot. Mysteriously concluding with a shot of a concrete bridge, this remake of Dino Risi's 1974 Vittorio Gassman vehicle *Profumo di donna* is not quite as odious - despite the cheap laughs - as the original. But it seems equally unlikely to win many admirers.

Philip Strick



Close but no bouquet: Al Pacino

Stay Tuned

USA 1992

Director: Peter Hyams

Certificate
PG
Distributor
Warner Bros.
Production Company
Morgan Creek
Executive Producers
David Nickay
Gary Barber
Producer
James G. Robinson
Co-producer
Arne I. Schmidt
Production Associate
Carlos H. Sanchez
Production Co-ordinators
Catherine Howard
Mandy Spencer-Phillips
Louise Rosner
Melissa Kurtz
Production Manager
Richard Sullivan
Unit Production Manager
Michael Macdonald
Location Managers
Wendy Williams
Charles Miller
Post-production Supervisor
Jody Levin
Casting
Lynn Stalmaster
Assistant Directors
Jack Sanders
Rachel Leiterman
Adam Druxman
2nd Unit:
Robert Lee
Charles Miller
Screenplay
Tom S. Parker
Jim Jennewein
Story
Tom S. Parker
Jim Jennewein
Richard Siegel
Director of Photography
Peter Hyams
Color
Technicolor
Camera Operator
Ralph Gerling
Playback Operator
Nina McPeck
24 Frame Video Displays
Video Image:
Rhonda C. Gunner
Gregory L. McMurry
Richard E. Hollander
John C. Wash
David Hofflich
Pete Martinez
Monte Swann
Visual Effects
Rhythm & Hues Inc.
Producer:
Liz Ralston-Bugge
Supervisor:
John Nelson
Co-ordinator:
Ladd McPartland
Director of Photography:
Mark Vargo
Art Direction:
Clark Anderson
Michael Gibson
Computer Graphics
Team Supervisors:
Kathy White
Daniele Colajacomo
David Weinberg
Animation
Supervision and Design:
Chuck Jones
Co-supervisor:
Jeffrey M. DeGrandis
Storyboards:
Jeffrey M. DeGrandis
Producers:
Steven Paul Leiva
Linda Jones
Animators:
Ken Bruce
Susan M. Zytka
Brad Forbush
Mark Fisher
Lee McCaula
Art Director/Layout:
Guy Vasilovich
Backgrounds:
Tim Maloney
Supervising
Effects Animator:
David Bossert
Ink and Paint
Supervisor:
Jungia Wolf
Paint Lab Supervisor:
Deborah Rykoff
Bennett
Make-up Supervisor:
Cynthia Surage
Checkers:
Charlotte Clark
Karen Hansen
Inkers:
Shigeko Doyle
Maria Gonzalez
Gel Cleaner:
Donna Narthuminti
Editor
Peter E. Berger
Production Designer
Philip Harrison
Art Directors
Richard Hudolin
David Willson
Set Decorators
Rose Marie McSherry
Daniel Bradette
Lin Macdonald
Annmarie Corbett
Set Dressers
Brad Mulder
Patrick Kearns
Chuck Robinson
Brent Bennett
Special Effects Co-ordinators
John Thomas
George Erschamber
Special Effects Foreman:
Don Leask
Animatronics Technician
Mike Steffe
Music
Bruce Broughton
Orchestrations
Bruce Broughton
Don Nimitz
Music Editors
Jeff Carson
Jim Harrison
Songs
"Start Me Up"
performed by
Salt-N-Pepa; "Taste"
performed by Auto
& Cherokee; "Bad
Bad Bad" performed
by Kool Moe Dee;
"The Mic Stalker"
performed by Dr Ice
Choreographer
Anthony Thomas
Costume Design
Joe I. Tompkins
Costumers
Supervisors:
Debbie Douglas
Debbie Geaghan
Ann Russell
Make-up Artists
Head:
Lee Harman
Sandy Cooper
Special Make-up Design
Alex Gillis
Tom Woodruff Jr
Prosthetics
Burman Studios
Title Design
Saxon/Ross Film Design
Titles/Opicals
Additional:
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editors
Scott Martin Gershin
Wylie Stateman

Sound Editors
Robert Bathas
David Baldwin
Jay Richardson
Mark Lanza
John Miceli
Peter Sullivan
Scott Mosteller
Willy Allen
Dialogue:
Chris Hogan
Randy Kelly
Dan Rich
ADR Supervisor
Joe Mayer
Sound Recordists
Ralph Parker
Daryl Powell
Foley:
Marilyn Graf
ADR:
Robert Deschaine
Music:
Armin Steiner
Sound Re-recordinists
John Reitz
Dave Campbell
Gregg Rudloff
Foley Artists
John Roesch
Kevin Bartnoff
Stunt Co-ordinators
Gary Combs
2nd Unit:
Ken Kirzinger
Stunts
Lou Bollo
Mike Mitchell
Yver Cameron
Scott Nicholson
Gil Combs
Fred Perron
Jim Clark
Fiona Roeske
Peter Cox
Bill Stewart
Dorothy Fehr
Melissa Stubbs
Alex Green
Dawn Stofer-Rupp
George Josef
Jennifer Watson
Michael Langlois
Keith Wardlow
JJ Makaro
Brent Woolsey
Fencing Doubles
John Ritter
Philip Romano
Jeffrey Jones
George Ruge
Wolf Pack
Wasatch Rocky
Mountain Wildlife Inc

Cast
John Ritter
Roy Knable
Pam Dawber
Helen Knable
Jeffrey Jones
Spike
David Tom
Darryl Knable
Heather McComb
Diane Knable
Bob Dishy
Murray Seidenbaum
Joyce Gordon
Mrs Seidenbaum
Eugene Levy
Crowley
Erik King
Pierce
Don Callis
Wetzel
John Blackwell Destroy
Sackler
Susan Blommoert
Ducker
Maurice Verkaar
Another Buyer
Ken Douglas
Skeletal Worker
Garry Nairn
Newscaster
Bela Wilson
Guy Squirly
Don Pardo
Game Show Announcer
Leo Albano
Ring Announcer
George Gray
Mr Gorgon
Felix Minton
Mrs Gorgon
Alan C. Peterson
Wrestling Referee

Marlene Dorn
Cyndi
Laura Harris
Andrea Nemeth
Timothy Michas
Girlfriends
Kristin Clarke
Velma
Glenn Rocco
Guido
Biff Croft
John "Beer" Curtis
Torpedos
Victor A. Young
Handsome Guard
Jonathan Pailone
Heavy Set Guard
Ken Kramer
Inkeeper
Dave "Squatch" Ward
David Longworth
Peasant
Gordon Maston
Executioner
Mario O'Connor
Joey
Michael Putnam
Nobleman
Janet Craig
Miss Daisy
Hamberly Reckall
Instructor
Michael Hogan
Duane
Jimi Dimples
Garf
Colleen Winton
Anchor Woman
Alan Schneider
Android
Eugene Davis
Frankensteinfeld
Peter Haworth
Des Smiley
Old Men
George Beuchbach
Butler
Terry Lewis
Max Hell Man
Jerry Wasserman
Cop
Rebecca Tootin
Crying Widow
Shane Meier
Serge Houde
Julie Bond
"Yogi Beer"
P. Lynn Johnson
Boyd Norman
John Kirk Connell
Samantha McKenna
"Silencer of the Lambs"
Steve Adams
John Pyper Ferguson
Kevin McHaffy
Joe Norman Shaw
"30 Something to Life"
Todd Duckworth
Robert Wisden
Peter Yunker
"3 Men and Rosemary's
Baby"
Roselya Royce
Jane Nagy
"Three's Company
Spoof"
Morby Azar
Steve Azar
Fatima Robinson
Frada Estaville
Jessie Harris
Indrani De Souza
Leticia Oliver
Tracy Horbachuk
Robert Vison
Lisa Stevens
Mike Gray
Marlene Windsor
Free Crawford
Grant Vandyke
David Avotar
Dolan Jose
Rami Melendez
Ema Huzel
Boogie (Laura) O'Banion
Brad Rapier
Jazzy (James) Everett
Kelly Kanne
Dancers

7,947 feet
88 minutes

Mr Spike, an emissary from Hell who snatches souls by offering free trials of an infernal cable system, sets his sights on suburban television addict Roy Knable, convincing him to have a giant satellite dish installed. Helen, Roy's wife, threatens to leave him because of his devotion to TV, but both are sucked into the dish and transported to a television, where they must survive for a full day if their souls are to be saved. Roy and Helen progress through various channels - a game show called *You Can't Win*, a tag-wrestling match, a frozen soap called *Northern Overexposure*, a cartoon in which they play animated mice pursued by a robot cat.

Meanwhile, their children Darryl and Diane realise what has happened and try to rescue their parents with home-made gadgetry. Helen is separated from Roy, who searches for her across the channels, guesting on a comedy sketch, *Duane's Underworld*, on a show called *Saturday Night Dead*, before catching up with Helen in a black-and-white private-eye movie and being zapped with her into *Off With His Head*, a mini-series about the French Revolution; Roy plays a disguised marquis who is caught and sentenced to the guillotine. Darryl taps into the show and impersonates the voice of God, deferring the execution until the 24-hour deadline has passed and Spike must let Roy go free. However, a catch in the cable contract means that Helen must remain, and she is tied to a wagonload of dynamite on railroad tracks in a Western, forcing Roy to return and battle with Spike through a swash-buckling movie, a music video and the western, finally defeating the Devil and freeing Helen. Spike loses his job and the Knables' marriage is saved.

Similar in its sequence-hopping tone to *Waxwork II: Lost In Time*, and in its anything-goes fantasy gimmickry to *Terrorvision*, this is a lazily-conceived comedy (the linking of television with Mephistophelean soul-sapping goes back at least as far as *Meet Mr Lucifer* in 1953) through which the performers mainly coast. John Ritter (briefly and amusingly horrified to find himself back on the set of *Three's Company*, the sitcom that made his name) and Pam Dawber (just as bland as she was in *Mork and Mindy*) blend all too well into the second-rate TV hells into which they are plunged, while reliable and witty players like Jeffrey Jones and Eugene Levy barely register in feeble demon roles.

With a plot that simply hops from parody to toothless parody and script devices that come and go as needed, *Stay Tuned* suffers from director Hyams' lack of real satirical sharpness in his sketch-length assaults. The *Wayne's World* skit, for example, is accurate but pointless, trying to send up a source which is much cannier in scoring points off TV and pop culture, while the cartoon sequence, directed by Chuck Jones, is fine in its detail (including a reference to the hallowed Acme Company) but suffers, as did Jones' 60s Tom and Jerry cartoons, from a premise and characters he had so completely turned inside out in his 50s works as to render them antique. The film is funnier in its shorter jabs, with a sprinkling of excellent one-shot gags in glimpses of such shows as *Three Men and Rosemary's Baby*, thirtysomething to life and *Driving Over Miss Daisy* providing enough nicely snide moments to keep the whole thing ticking over when it should be collapsing completely.

Kim Newman



Start the Revolution without them: Levy, Dawber, Ritter

Tale of a Vampire

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Shimako Sato

Certificates
18
Distributor
State Screen
Distribution
Production Company
State Screen
In association with
Tsuburaya Eizo Ltd.
Furama Ltd
Executive Producer
Noriko Shishikura
Producer
Simon Johnson
Co-producer
Linda Kay
Production Co-ordinator
Caitlin Samways
Production Manager
Mark Matthews
Location Manager
David Pinnington
2nd Unit Director
Chris Wright
Assistant Directors
Ray Corbett
Charlie Watts
Stefan Gates
Richard Freeston
Screenplay
Shimako Sato
Jane Corbett
Director of Photography
Zubin Mistry
In colour
2nd Unit Director of Photography
Martyr Bray
Camera Operator
Swavek Zukowski
Steadicam Operator
Dennis Kingston
Video Operator
Ian Morales
Graphic Design
Andy Vellor
Editor
Chris Wright
Production Designer
Alice Norrington
Art Director
Tom Burton
Scenic Artists
Kate Borthwick
Chris Evans
Gary Lawrence
Ruth Kinton
Tom Pye
Harry Ward
Scriptures
Hannah Littlejohns
Steve Stockbridge
Special Effects Supervisor
Dave Watkins
Music
Julian Joseph

Wardrobe Supervisor
Margaret Miller
Chief Make-up Artist
Mel Gibson
Titles
Simon Dowling
Opticals
Howell Optical Printers
Sound Supervisor
Jaime Estrada-Torres
Sound Recordists
Ronald Bailey
Foley:
Ted Swanscott
Sound Re-recorder
Paul Hamblin
Synthesizer Sound Effects
Andy Kennedy
Foley Artists
Jack Stew
Dianne Greaves
Stunt Co-ordinator
Terry Forrestal

Cast
Julian Sands
Alex
Suzanna Hamilton
Anne/Virginia
Kenneth Cranham
Edgar, The Man in the Hat
Marian Diamond
Denise
Michael Newton
Magazine Man
Catherine Blake
Virginia, age 5
Mark Kompos
Morgue Official
Nik Myers
Rent Boy
Kee Pritchard
Ian Robinson
Burns
David King
Waiter
Adriano Alexander
Prostitute
Mark Motlob
Karl Motlob
Lisa Motlob
Children
Jake Omega
John
Charles Onisc
Roberto Sirelli
French Voices
Nik Myers
Newscaster's Voice
Oliver Smith
Burn's Voice

9,170 feet
102 minutes

In modern day London, ageless vampire Alex is haunted by visions of his long lost love Virginia. By night, Alex prowls the streets, followed secretly by Edgar, The Man in the Hat. At the library where Alex daily researches ancient texts, Anne, a young girl similar in appearance to Virginia responds to a mysterious job invitation for an assistant librarian. Alex is besotted and secretly follows Anne home after work. Next day at the library, Alex engages Anne in conversation, but stricken with grief over the recent death of her boyfriend, she resists any intimacy. Unbeknown to Alex, Edgar introduces himself to Anne at the library and takes her to dinner, where he tells her he knew Alex in France.

Anne agrees to deliver a parcel from Edgar to Alex; left anonymously on Alex's doorstep, the parcel contains the mummified hand of Virginia, Edgar's

wife. Bemused, Alex pays a late call to Anne, to whom he refers as Virginia. During a brief passionate embrace, Alex draws blood from Anne, before fleeing into the night. Edgar confronts Anne with the truth that Alex is a vampire, and dispatches her to end his unnatural life. At Alex's warehouse home, Anne is unable to kill her lover, despite his pleas for her to end his sadness. Neither will Alex consent to Anne's desire to become a vampire too. Distraught, she leaves, disappearing for two days.

Later, another parcel containing a red stone given to Anne by Alex arrives at Alex's door. Unable to track down Anne at the library, Alex returns home where he finds Anne lying on his bed, her body adorned with petals and ribbons, a bite mark on her neck, and a card from Edgar offering her as a gift of undying love. Edgar emerges from the darkness and impales Alex on a steel blade, pinning him to the wall. Edgar declares that his faithless vampire wife Virginia is still alive, locked for eternity in her coffin beneath the sea. Enraged, Alex breaks the hilt from the sword in his chest, impales Edgar on its broken end and pushes him through the window into the river below. He attempts to revive Anne with his blood, but to no avail. Back at the library, Alex sees a new assistant take Anne's place and announces that he is moving north.

Shot with a minuscule budget (less than £1 million) on inventive locations around London (most notably Deptford, looking surprisingly Gothic), this tale of modern day vampires takes its thematic inspiration from Edgar Allan Poe's sombre poem *Annabel Lee*. Although first-time director and co-scriptwriter Shimako Sato is Japanese, her visual style owes more to Tony Scott than to an oriental tradition. Smoke swathes the screen and light filters through half-drawn blinds at every opportunity. But the inevitable comparisons with the stylish but vacuous *The Hunger* do Sato's film an injustice. Centring on the unbearable loneliness of undying love, this twisted tale uses sparse, understated dialogue to evoke a genuine sense of grief and loss absent from mainstream fodder.

Unfortunately, pace is the victim here, and the frequent languorous, atmospheric interludes threaten to alienate the viewer. However, strong performances by Julian Sands as Alex and Kenneth Cranham as Edgar keep the life-blood pulsing, and the miscasting of the resolutely unenigmatic Suzanna Hamilton as Anne/Virginia proves no more than an irritating distraction. The real disappointment is the fact that the British-based State Screen Productions had to look substantially to Japan for finance, a sad reflection on the current state of the moribund British film industry. *Tale of a Vampire* is a flawed but impressive debut from a talent which deserves to be nurtured.

Mark Kermode

Toys

USA 1992

Directed: Barry Levinson

Certificates
PG
Distributor
20th Century Fox
Production Company
20th Century Fox
Producers
Mark Johnson
Barry Levinson
Co-producers
Charles Newirth
Peter Giuliano
Production Co-ordinators
Katie Gilbert
Julie White
Unit Production Manager
Charles Newirth
Location Managers
Charlie Harrington
Michael John Meehan
Post-production Supervisor
Robert Grasmere
Costing
Ellen Chienoweth
Assistant Directors
Peter Giuliano
Kate Davey
Stephen P. Dunn
Annette N. Suters
Screenplay
Valerie Curtin
Barry Levinson
Director of Photography
Adam Greenberg
Colour
CPI
prints by Deluxe
Camera Operators
Bill Roe
Paul Babin
Animation: Pat Kenly
Video Graphic Displays
Video Image
Rhonda C. Gunner
Richard E. Hollander
Gregory L. McMurry
John C. Wash
Image Co-ordinator:
Janet Earl
Special Visual Effects
Dream Quest Images
Executive Producer:
Keith Shartle
Producer:
Robert Stodd
Supervisor:
Mat Beck
Post-production Supervisor:
Beth Block
Optical Supervisor
Jeff Matakovich
Optical/Digital Effects
VCE
Peter Kuran
Littleton Brothers
Kevin Kutchavov
David Emerson
Brian Griffin
Todd Hall
Gary George
William Conner
Jo Martin
Marilyn Nave
Jacqueline Zietlow
Matte Painting
Mark Sullivan
Digital Supervisor
Howard Burdick
Co-ordinator:
Jody Levine
Digital Visual Effects/Animation
Pacific Data Images
Executive Producers:
John Swallow
Carl Rosendahl
Producers:
Julia Gibson
Michele Ferrone
Supervisor:
Janie Dixon
Production Manager:
Barbara McCullough
Technical Director:
Andrew Adamson

Animation
Co-ordinator:
Anjelica Castillas
Performance:
Graham Walters
Mechanical Lead
Erik Stohl
Mechanical:
Roland Loew
Tom Quinn
Eric Heister
Roy Goode
Robert Kohut
Sanford Kennedy
George Bernota
Brian Ripley
Animators
Rebecca Marie
Barbara Meier
Kevin Rafferty
George Bruder
Wendy Rogers
Editor
Stu Linder
Production Designer
Eduardo Scarfotti
Art Director
Edward Richardson
Set Designers
Robert M. Beall
Thomas F. Betts
John E. Dexter
Beverly Eagan
Harold Fuhrman
Joseph E. Hubbard
Nick Navarro
Darrell L. Wight
Set Decorator
Linda DeSenna
Set Dressers
Nancy Gilmore
Donn Piller
John Rankin
Leslie Warren
Illustrator
Carl Aldana
Scenic Artists
Michael Denering
Ronald Farnsworth
John Moffitt
Ed Strang
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Clayton Pinney
Special Effects
David Blitstein
Pat Domenico
William Dale Harrison
Richard Stutsman
Special Alaska Character Effects
Rob Bottin
Fernando Faviola
Art Pimentel
Vince Prentice
Sam Sainz
Loren Soman
Todd Westlow
Sound Generating Jacket Technology
Giancarlo Giamini
Co-ordinator:
Vivian Treves
Pyrotechnics
Joe Viskocil
Head Sculptor/Modelmaker
Kirk Starbird
Sculptors
Tully Summers
Stacy Wexler
Models
Anthony Cope
Robert Olivas
Scott Schneider
Jeff Pyle
Gary Marvis
Additional Toys/Miniature Effects
Stetson Visual Services
Robert Spurlock
Mark Stetson
Music
Hans Zimmer
Trevor Horn
Music Director
Shirley Walker

Music performed by
Sounds
Jeff Rona
Vocals:
Julia Migenes
Alexys Schwartz
Solo Guitar:
Pete Haycock
Uilleann Pipes:
John Isham
Music Arrangements
Hans Zimmer
Trevor Horn
Orchestrations
Shirley Walker
Bruce Fowler
Music Supervisor
James Hamberg
Songs
"The General's March"
by Bruce Fowler; "Fool
Mental Jacket" by and
performed by Jeff
Rona; "Video Killed
the Tank Gunner" by
Jeff Rona, performed
by Jeff Rona, Nico and
The Gang
Choreography
Anthony Thomas
Costume Design
Albert Wolsky
Costume Supervisors
George L. Little
Carlane Passman
Make-up
Key: Cheri Minns
Artists: Hattie D'Amore
Jack Warden's Old Age
Make-up
Greg Nelson
Titles/Opticals
Howard A.
Anderson Co.
Sound Design
Richard Beggs
Supervising Sound Editor
Gloria S. Borders
Sound Editors
Paige Sartorius
Ewa Stompke
ADR Editor
C.J. Appel
Foley Editors
Marian Wilde
Clare Freeman
Sandina Bailo-Lape
Sound Recordists
Ron Judkins
Music:
Jay Rifkin
Armin Steiner
Foley Recordist
Christopher Boyles
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recorder
Richard Beggs
Tom Johnson
Sound Effects Editors
Robert Shoup
Ethan Van der Ryn
Foley Artists
Dennie Thorpe
Marnie Moore
Toy Consultants
Alan J. Adler
Teruhisa Kitahara
Stunt Co-ordinator
James Arnett
Stunts
Keith Campbell
Gil Combs
Mark DeAlessandro
Andrew W. Epper
Jeffrey R. Evans
Gary Hynes
Matt Johnston
Maria Kelly
Lisa McCullough
DeAlessandro
Janet Lee Orcutt
Michael Runyard

Cast
Robin Williams
Leslie Zevo
Michael Gambon
The General
Joan Cusack
Alsatia Zevo
Robin Wright
Gwen
L.L. Cool J
Patrick
Donald O'Connor
Kenneth Zevo
Arthur Malet
Owens Owens
Jack Warden
Zevo Snr
Debi Mazar
Nurse Debbie
Wendy Melvoin
Choir Soloist
Julia Oscar Mechoso
Cortez
Jamie Foxx
Baker
Shelly Dussal
Shimura
Blake Clark
Hogenstern
Charles Almon
Magraw
Art Metrano
Guard at Desk
Tommy Townsend
Tegnell
Kate Boston
Steve Park
Julie Hayden
Vandrey Smith
Researchers
Ralph Tabakin
Fred
Martha Faulkner
Mary
Alex Bookston
Minister
Manny Portel
Joe
Brooks Mondae
Guard in General's
Office
Sam Levinson
War Room Player
Kevin West
Technician
Jonathan McGarry
Strupid Egghead
Jacques Lynn Colton
Woman in
Supermarket
Folton Anderson III
Jenny Canales
Amy Arvon Gibbins
Michaela Herbon
Nicholas Herbon
Benjamin Hernandez
Sarah M. Lofgren
Eric W. Miller
Jeffrey R. Miller
Kristy E. Miller
Tashoga J. Peterson
Heather Rogers
Denise J. Saeedee
Lissette Yvonne Saeedee
Summer Simann
Jimmy Spooner
Sarah Yee
Children of the World
Choir
Lael Branson
Delores Finch
Lisa Fink
Jerry Goldman
Gerald McKinnis
Owens E. Sobushky
John Stevens
Roldan M. Williams
Factory Workers

10,934 feet
121 minutes

Toy tycoon Kenneth Zevo, who built up a business against the wishes of his militarist father, realises that he is dying and, feeling his son Leslie not yet mature enough to take over, approaches his brother Leland, a disillusioned general, to run the business until Leslie is ready. After Kenneth's funeral, Leland takes the job and is perturbed by the air of harmless jollity about the factory, pressing ▶



Boys-R-Us: Michael Gambon

◀ Leslie to break with Kenneth's tradition by developing a line of war toys.

Leslie and his sister Alsatia are increasingly marginalised while Leland brings in his son Patrick, a covert operations specialist, to head a security force. Leslie finds time to romance Gwen, an employee who runs the photocopier, but Leland becomes increasingly paranoid, abandoning simple war toys in favour of a programme to develop toy-like weapons. Although Washington refuses to listen to his schemes, Leland continues his project. With help from Alsatia, Leslie breaks into the restricted area of the factory and discovers a cadre of children playing video games which can control weapons of destruction at long distance. Learning Leland was responsible for the death of his mother in Vietnam, Patrick defects to Leslie's faction and Leland, now completely insane, turns the deadly toys on them. Rallying the last remaining innocent playthings (whose clockwork can confuse the weapons' movement sensors), Leslie takes a stand against the onslaught of the deadly toys and is able to breach Leland's control centre and subdue him. A secret weapon in the shape of a sea monster runs wild and shoots Alsatia, revealing her to be an automaton created as company for the young Leslie, then wounds Leland. Leslie, with Alsatia repaired and Gwen at his side, at last resumes control of the factory.

● The internal mechanisms of *Toys* are seriously skewed, producing a film that lurches awkwardly between attempted charm and sinister significance. The clockwork finally winds down with a confusing all-action melee that hardly sits with the script's stance against the brand of fantasised mass devastation represented by the zap-the-enemy video games favoured by Leland. In the end, Levinson seems to delight in filling the screen with images of mechanical carnage more in tune with the malevolent playthings of Charles Band's filmography (*Demonic Toys*, *Dolls*, *Puppet Master*) than the chunkily old-fashioned primary-colour models Kenneth and Leslie Zevo favour. This latter aspect is typified by a friendly elephant, supposedly the first successful Zevo toy, which serves

as Kenneth's gravestone and prompts a strange version of the Fordian talking-to-the-dead scene as Alsatia explains her troubles to the giant elephant stone while a laughing toy buried with Kenneth continues to cackle in the ground.

More damagingly askew, perhaps, is the balance of the script which, in early scenes with Leland as the outsider entering the hermetically strange world of the factory and perplexed by its bizarre inhabitants, weirdly makes the villain appear the central character. Robin Williams' familiar schtick, augmented by such gag props as a smoking jacket or a tableful of fake vomit splashes ("As an Asian I object," one of the toy designers moans, "this is a white man's vomit"), hardly makes Leslie a distinctive character. While Michael Gambon's caricature militarist (picking up on all the familiar tics of mad generals in dozens of whacky comedies from *Dr Strangelove* to *Harold and Maude*) is hardly original or sympathetic, he does tend to overpower the film until Williams himself turns gung-ho for the best comic speech, as he delivers a caricature of a rallying-the-troops speech to an array of toys destined to be cannon fodder. "Alien Al," he upbraids one, "you were never a big seller and we stuck by you." Despite his gentleness and dislike of war toys, it is debatable whether Leslie's own speciality of practical jokes is not, in the end, more cruel and adversarial than Leland's simple fantasies of combat and victory.

While the film is certainly ingenious and striking in its design, and goes overboard to make its evil toys black and brutal caricatures of violence, an unbitten creepiness somehow attaches to the innocent vision Leslie and Kenneth represent. Alsatia, although ultimately a robotrix, throughout hovers tastelessly between kooky and retarded; Joan Cusack's actually very potent performance somehow makes the role more uncomfortable than anything else, tying in with a line of clockwork automata associated in cinema with bizarre and sexual violence, from *Tales of Hoffmann* through to *Blade Runner*. And the utopian happy factory seen at the beginning, with its singing workers and spacious canteen, still seems to offer the employees nothing more than a place on a *Metropolis*-style production line, their general good spirits suggesting enforced lobotomy rather than joyous productivity.

Pitched uncertainly at children (with LL Cool J and a horrible MTV interlude to expand the demographics), this has oddly adult strands (security men spy on Leslie and Gwen only to have their toy spy incapacitated by Gwen's discarded bra; Patrick learns that his mother died because Leland sent her on a reconnaissance mission to Hanoi disguised as Jane Fonda). But these provide a few solid gags amid the wreckage of a film that would clearly like to be a lot more benevolent than it actually has the heart to be.

Kim Newman

Triple Bogey on a Par Five Hole

USA 1991

Director: Amos Poe

Certificate

Not yet issued

Distributor

ICA

Production Company

Poe Productions

For Island World

Producer

Amos Poe

Co-producers

Dolly Hall

Benjamin Gruberg

Associate Producer

Betuna Giloi

Production Co-ordinator

Deering Rose

Production Manager

Benjamin Gruberg

Casting

Ellen Parks

Assistant Directors

Dolly Hall

John Thorpe

Screenplay

Amos Poe

Director of Photography

Joe Desalvo

Colour/Black & White

Editor

Dana Congdon

Production Designer

Jocelyne Beaudoin

Art Director

Noemi Di Corcia

Music

Anna Domino

Michel Delory

Mader

Chic Streetman

Costume Design

Ann R. Eno

Sound Editors

Eliza Paley

Ira Spiegel

Sound Recordist

Thomas Szabo

Cast

Eric Mitchell

Remy Gravelle

Dolly Hall

Amanda Levy

Angela Gouthain

Bree Levy

Jesse McBride

Satch Levy

Alba Clemente

Nina Baccardi

Robbie Coltrane

Steffano Baccardi

Olga Bagmasco

Stacha

Phil Hoffman

Clutch

Tom Cohen

Freddy Arnstein

John Hays

Roman

Avital Dicher

Cookie

May An

The Masseuse

John Schmorling

Brien O'Brien

Lee Magria

Captain Aria

Chic Streetman

Joe Hawkins

7,920 feet

88 minutes

tan, Remy watches the Super-8 home movies that the mother obsessively took before her death. He talks to the Levys, but learns little: Amanda only remembers her mother taking the films; Satch accuses his parents of being "pathetic losers" and attacks Amanda, who he thinks is too perfect; Bree, the youngest and most articulate sibling, remembers nothing.

Baccardi, the children's lawyer, tells Remy how the 13-year-old Amanda fought the courts in order to stop the children being split up between foster homes and how she won with the condition that they had a guardian - Baccardi's niece Nina, who had arrived in America from Italy on the day of the killings. Remy meets Nina, who is about to marry her fiancée Joe and leave the children. Nina realises that Amanda has begun to intrigue and excite Remy, who also doubts whether there is a story to be written about. Remy meets Amanda and Bree in the latter's cabin, where Bree refuses to go to bed, accusing Amanda of acting like her mother; Amanda slaps her face. Remy speaks to Nina, who admits she has not married Joe because she also loved the children. Satch's girlfriend Cookie arrives on the boat and the two make love, but are stopped by a disappointing Amanda. Remy phones O'Brien, the man who shot the Levy parents, for his account of their death. Satch, in more serious mood, speaks emotionally about the day when he was left to look after Bree and had to identify the corpses.

Amanda and Satch argue over his plan to open a bike shop instead of going to college. He leaves, throwing her virginity in her face. There is a drunken party the night Nina leaves to marry Joe, and afterwards Remy and Amanda make love. Next morning, Satch and Cookie announce their plan to marry. Amanda agrees to the bike shop plan and becomes partner, announcing her plan to go to Paris with Remy, who tells his Hollywood bosses that he is off the project as there is no story. Bree starts writing her own story.

● Made by Amos Poe after a fairly long sojourn in Hollywood as a screenwriter, *Triple Bogey* is a fascinat-

● Screenwriter Remy Gravelle has been hired to research the story of the famous Levy children Bree, Satch and Amanda, whose parents were killed some 13 years earlier whilst robbing golfers. Remy interviews literary agent Arnstein who tells him how Amanda, then aged 13, approached him with a manuscript shortly after her parents' death and how she became a rich, successful author. He suggests that Remy talk to the children. On the yacht *Triple Bogey*, on which the Levys live circling Manhat-



Off-off-off Broadway: Alba Clemente

ing film, if a flawed one. Poe was a founding figure of the New American underground film of the 70s and 80s associated very much with the New York scene (Jarmusch is very much an offshoot of Poe's pioneering work with *The Blank Generation* and *Subway Riders*). In this return to independent filmmaking, Poe retains a visual flair and cleverness but either lacks the means to flesh it out or is dealing a post-modernist hand by way of an experimental narrative that owes much to Hollywood and particularly Welles. Either way, *Triple Bogey* is a glittering, ice-cold film compromised by its own knowingness.

Remy, the hardened screenwriter (played with some panache by underground film-maker Eric Mitchell) pursues the story of a bunch of spoilt young siblings as they sail, seemingly forever, around the great American cinematic icon Manhattan Island. This strikes one as a conceit that points to many other matters: Hollywood cinema, New York, narration, history and memory, and the problems of artistic expression. Poe builds his film around Remy, who instigates every scene, sometimes at the edge of the frame and often off-shot, with only his voice and other characters' off-shot looks establishing his presence. His voice-over constitutes the film's framework – the coherence in a mess of emotions spoken and unspoken.

The ghost of Welles haunts the film's visual sensibility and setting. Its homage to *The Lady From Shanghai* rests on the nautical setting, the voice-over technique, the sumptuous black-and-white photography and more importantly the voyeuristic relationship between the scriptwriter and the icy blonde (echoing Michael O'Hara's gazing on Rita Hayworth's Elsa, erotically draped across the yacht deck). Its narrative, on the other hand – the search for the mystery behind the remnants of an infamous family – reminds us of *Citizen Kane* without Rosebud. At its centre, the glacial virgin Amanda falls for the narrator who, as an obvious surrogate for Poe himself, acts out the director's search for a plot. This authorial infinite regress is vertiginous but rather dumped on the audience.

If *Citizen Kane* is a film about the fate of the self in the modern period, where memory and the construction of an individual seem like impossibilities, then Poe reiterates that view but ironically opts for a happy existentialist ending. *Triple Bogey*'s surface glitter, its casual use of cinematic quotation, its playful narrative that in the end proves not to be one, all suggest that the film is an end-of-the-line attempt at what might be called postmodern narrative. If all narrative is just a game of authorial control and ideological closure, then the film's ambivalences make sense. But Poe also wants to retain a sense of the old-fashioned pain and misery of the siblings, and the lack of resolution between these two impulses flaws what is otherwise Poe's confident return.

Michael O'Pray

Under Siege

USA 1992

Director: Andrew Davis

Certificate

15

Distributor

Warner Bros

Production Company

Warner Bros

Executive Producers

J.E. Lawton

Gary Goldstein

Producers

Arnon Milchan

Steven Seagal

Steven Reuther

Co-producers

Jack B. Bernstein

Peter MacGregor-Scott

Unit Production Manager

P.M. Scott

Location Managers

Curtis Collins

Conrad Bailey

Post-production Supervisor

Carol Dantuono

2nd Unit Director

Conrad Palmisano

Costing

Pamela Basker

Assistant Directors

Tom Mack

David Kelley

James Dennett II

Screenplay

J.F. Lawton

Director of Photography

Frank Tidy

Colour

Continental Film

Prints by:

Technicolor

2nd Unit Photography

Gary Holt

Aerial Photography

Frank Holgate

Camera Operators

Peter Kleinow

John Mesa

A: Frank Miller

B: Steve St. John

2nd Unit:

P. Scott Sakamoto

Louis Noto

Steadicam Operator

Steve St. John

Video/Computer Supervisor

Liz Radley

Special Visual Effects

Introvision

International

Supervisor:

William Mesa

Producers:

Andrew Naud

Linda Landry-Nelson

Computer Graphics

Rick Whirfield

Editor

Robert A. Ferretti

Associate Editors

Dennis Virkler

Don Brochu

Dov Hoenig

Production Designer

Bill Kenney

Art Director

Bill Hiney

Art Department

Co-ordinator

Maggie Martin

Set Design

Al Manzer

Set Decorator

Rick Gentz

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Thomas L. Fisher

Special Effects

Scott Fisher

Jay King

Terry King

Bruce Minkus

Andy Miller

Radio Controlled Model Planes

Larry Jolly

Music

Gary Chang

Music Director/Orchestrations

Todd Hayen

Music Editors

Sally Boldt

Carlton Kaller

Songs

"Whiskey Fever"

by Clifford Smith,

James Hughes, Johnny

Barnes, Robert Bird,

Randy Smith, Mark

Aceves, performed by

The Regulators;

"Rap Mama Goose",

"Love You to Death"

by Gene Barge, Hiram

Bullock, Tony Brown,

Chris Cameron,

Richard Davis, Tad

Robinson, Wayne

Stewart, Tommy Lee

Jones; "The Power"

by Benito Benitez,

John Garrett III, Toni

C, performed by Snap;

"Voodoo Child

(Slight Return)" by

and performed by Jimi

Hendrix; "Sea of Blues"

by Gene Barge, Hiram

Bullock, Tony Brown,

Chris Cameron,

Richard Davis,

Tad Robinson, Wayne

Stewart; "Ooh Baby"

by Paul Colt, Ricky

Hart, Pete Sykes, Steve

Ross, performed by

Screams and Dreams

Costume Design

Richard Bruno

Costume Supervisors

Laurie Riley

Wingate Jones

Costumers

Lisa Cacavas

Victoria Bruno

Make-up

Supervisor:

Jef Simons

Artist:

Gandhi Bob Arrollo

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editors

John Leveque

Bruce Stambler

Sound Editors

Richard E. Yawn

Glenn Hoskinson

Don Warner

Shawn Sykora

John Kwiatkowski

Richard Burton

Anthony R. Milch

Kimberly Lowe Voigt

Hector Gika

Bruce Fortune

Bob Bradshaw

Kim Secrist

Rocky Moriana Jr

Jay Nierenberg

Frank Kniest

Supervising ADR Editor

Becky Sullivan

ADR Editors

Michele Perrone

Holly Huckins

Supervising Foley Editors

Victoria Sampson

Scott D. Jackson

Foley Editors

Christine Danelski

Steven J. Schwalbe

Pamela Bentkowski

Sound Recordists

Scott Smith

Music:

Brian Reeves

Armin Steiner

Danny Wallin

Foley Recordists

Mary Jo Lang

Robert Alstadter

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Don Mitchell

Jeffrey J. Haboush

Frank A. Montano

Rick Hart

Sound Effects

Co-ordinators

John Michael Fanaris

Blake Marion

Leslie Ball

Sound Effects Recordists

Gary Bluffer

John Davis

Foley Artists

John Roesch

Alicia Stevenson

Technical Supervisor

Nick Davis

Technical Advisors

Joseph R. John

Robert Nichols

John Rottger

Consultants

Music:

Sharon Boyle

Fitness:

Jeffrey H. Kaufman

Stunt Co-ordinators

Conrad E. Palmisano

Jeff Dashnaw

Marine Co-ordinator

Moby Griffin

Stunts

Michael Adam

George Aguilar

Bruce Barbour

Richard L. Blackwell

Tim Card

Binh Dang

Jeff Dashnaw

Steve M. Davison

James Deeth

Greg Elam

Lance Gilbert

Carlos Gonzales

Dick Hancock

Clifford Happy

Tom Harper

Kane Hodder

Norman Howell

Terry Jackson

Jeff Jensen

Kevin La Rosa

Anderson Martin

Gary Morgan

Dean Mumford

John Rottger

Mark Stefanich

Brian J. Williams

Dick Ziker

Armourer

Lee Brown

Cast

Steven Seagal

Casey Ryback

Tommy Lee Jones

William Strannix

Gary Busby

Commander Krill

Erika Eleniak

Jordan Tate

Patrick O'Neal

Captain Adams

Damian Chapa

Tackman

Troy Evans

Granger

David McKnight

Flicker

Lee Hinton

Cue Ball

Glenn Morshower

Ensign Taylor

Leo Alexander

Lieutenant Smart

John Rottger

Commander Green

Brad Roa

◀ back on board, Jordan saves him from being shot by Strannix's heavy Daumer. Helped by Calaway, an ex-World II gunner's mate, Ryback uses the ship's 16-inch guns to sink the repaired submarine, just before it submerges with the stolen missiles on board. In retaliation, Strannix fires two cruise missiles at Honolulu. Having killed Strannix in a knife fight, Ryback contacts the Pentagon Crisis Action Centre; one of the missiles has been downed by an F11 fighter plane, but using the destruct code disc, Ryback is talked through the destruction of the remaining missile. Captain Adams is buried at sea with full military honours.

With a US box-office take in excess of \$80 million, this risible action adventure finally establishes Steven Seagal as a major league Action Man, while allegedly scuppering plans for a third *Die Hard* movie set on board a ship. This is doubly ironic, since what the movie lacks is precisely that level of knowing humour which sets the *Die Hard* films – and Bruce Willis' lip, slobbish persona – apart from such run-of-the-mill macho mayhem. Despite a Bond-style emphasis on gadgetry and hardware, the feeling here is not of a lightweight, comic-strip action picture, but of a laughably po-faced adventure yarn.

Seagal still takes himself far too seriously, lacking the ease and confidence needed to play things fast-and-loose. Nowhere is this more evident than in his character's unambiguous relationship with authority, which in Seagal's best films to date – *Nico* (US title: *Above the Law*) and *Out of Justice* – has raised questions that were not resolved by his eventual acceptance back into the police force and the community. Here, as in *Nico*, the film explicitly condemns the ruthless games played by the CIA; yet despite Ryback's own unconventional methods, the ex-Navy SEAL's actions are tacitly sanctioned by the paternalistic Chiefs of Staff to whom he constantly refers, and defers, via the satellite radio link. In this context, newsreel footage of George Bush welcoming home the troops from the Gulf War can be integrated without any hint of irony. Director Andrew Davis tries to make something of the idea that Ryback and Strannix are two sides of the same coin, disaffected military men who have responded in contrasting ways to a betrayal by their own bosses (Ryback's fall from grace followed a fight with a CIA man he held responsible for the deaths of several of his men in Panama). Unfortunately, this element is never developed by J. F. Lawton's crude, lumbering script, which finally resorts to crass short-hand. Like Strannix's pseudo-psychedelic terrorist, Ryback begins by wearing non-military clothes, a practice which brings him into conflict with the punctilious Commander Krill; in the final scene, however, Ryback is seen saluting his dead captain in full dress whites.

Nigel Floyd

RE-RELEASE

Noz w Wodzie (Knife in the Water)

Poland 1962

Director: Roman Polanski

Certificate

X

Distributor

BFI

Production Company

Union of Film-making

Groups

For the Camera

Film Group

Executive Producer

Stanislaw Zylewicz

Assistant Directors

Jakub Goldberg

Andrzej Kostenko

Maria Pietrzak

Screenplay

Jerzy Skolimowski

Jakub Goldberg

Roman Polanski

Director of Photography

Jerzy Lipman

Black and White

Camera Operator

Andrzej Gronau

Music

Krzysztof Komeda

Music performed by

Bernia Rosengrena

Tenor Sax:

Agnieszka Osiecka

Sound Editor

Halina Paszkowska

Cast

Leon Niemczyk

Andrzej

Jolanta Umecka

Christine

Zygmunt Malanowicz

Young Man

8,801 feet

98 minutes

Subtitles



Nouvelle vague: Jolanta Umecka, Zygmunt Malanowicz

Andrzej, a prosperous sports reporter, and his young wife Christine are driving to the lakes for a weekend on their yacht when they are stopped by a hitch-hiking student who jumps in front of their car so suddenly that Andrzej has difficulty in stopping in time. Furious with the boy, but half admiring his nerve, Andrzej agrees to give him a lift, and when they reach the yacht he impulsively asks the boy to join them. Andrzej is an expert yachtsman. He prides himself on his fitness and physical prowess as well as on the many gadgets which symbolise his success. Throughout the weekend he baits the youth, who has never sailed before, mocking his clumsiness. Moreover, he can see that the boy finds his wife attractive, which adds piquancy to the game.

The boy affects indifference, but is soon roused to envy and rage, while Christine watches both of them with silent disdain. Eventually they come to blows over the boy's only cherished possession, a flick knife. He is knocked into the water and vanishes. As he has claimed earlier that he cannot swim, Christine and Andrzej are alarmed and, after a fruitless search, Andrzej angrily swims ashore. When he has gone, the boy emerges from hiding, soaked and freezing. Christine, angry but relieved, comforts him and, in a moment of abandon, they make love. The boy goes on his way, and Christine catches up with Andrzej before he has time to report to the police. She tells him what happened on the yacht, leaving him divided between feelings of guilt and anger at his wife's infidelity.

Looking at *Knife in the Water* 30 years on, it remains striking for the way Polanski's signature overrides the marks of its Polish origins. Some specific references survive: the married couple are shamelessly *nouveau riche*, and Christine taunts the young man with a litany of impoverished student life that recognisably belongs to the Communist era. At the time, Polanski was put under considerable pressure to make the film more conformist. The ambiguous ending was criticised for showing the characters' lack of resolution and had to be trimmed, while the couple's car was changed from a Mercedes to a Peugeot lest a Polish audience should feel that Western affluence was too prevalent.

What makes the film a superbly confident and stylish debut is Polanski's assured handling of the medium. His camera technique involves fluid hand-held over-the-shoulder shots, often close in on the sides of faces, creating a point of view with the added frisson of physical discomfort. His compositions, some of which look similar to Welles' in *The Lady from Shanghai*, make the most of the limitations of the boat-and-water setting and mock any symbolism in the young man's role, framing him as Christ with outspread arms and a halo of coiled rope, or making him appear to walk on water. The soundtrack, composed after filming, antagonises the ear rather than soothes it – as with the buzzing fly in the confined cabin, or the dangerous thuds of the knife on wood in the game of splayed fingers.

The concise narrative and careful planting of telling plot details also

ensure the film's impact as spectacle rather than sociological document. Supposedly written in three days by Polanski and Jerzy Skolimowski, the script's exposition of sexual rivalry evidently benefited from the artistic competitiveness of the two directors. Indeed, each saw himself playing the young man, with the result that the actor dyed his hair blond (*à la* Skolimowski) and his voice was dubbed by Polanski himself. Throughout Polanski's films, the married couple has often been split apart, whether by sado-masochistic impulses (*Cul-de-Sac*), diabolic intervention (*Rosemary's Baby*) or vaulting ambition (*Macbeth*). In *Bitter Moon*, marital discord against a watery background was once again the focus of the narrative, with a hint that parenthood might provide salvation. In *Knife in the Water*, the couple seem to be bound together by material necessity (he is an older man, an egotistical sports writer, while she is a young woman apparently drawn to his bourgeois lifestyle) with no suggestion that they might produce a family. The situation is the familiar Polanski set-up in which one character attempts to dominate another as a rootless outsider upsets the uneasy status quo. Where this film scores over the melodramatic sprawl of *Bitter Moon* is in its masterly use of a single location and the claustrophobia of the tiny yacht. Confined settings have always suited Polanski's theatrical conception of character best, and this is nowhere more evident than in this still compelling film.

David Thompson

(This film was originally reviewed in MFB Vol.30 No.350, March 1963.)

Clothes In The Wardrobe

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Waris Hussein

Distributor
BBC TV
For Screen Two
Production Company
BBC TV
Executive Producer
Mark Shivas
Producer
Norma Heyman
Associate Producer
Derek Nelson
Production Associate
Ruth Mayocas
Production Supervisor
Hossam Aly
Production Managers
Melanie Dicks
Emma Bridgeman-Williams
Alan Charlesworth
Casting
Susie Egge
Assistant Directors
Daphne Phipps
David Reid
Theresa Macinnis
John Spencer
Screenplay
Martin Sherman
Based on the novel
by Alice Thomas Ellis
Director of Photography
Rex Maidment
In colour
Editor
Ken Pearce
Production Designer
Stuart Walker
Paintings
Peter Berrisford
Music
Stanley Myers
Costume Design
Odile Dicks-Mireaux
Leah Archer
Make-up
Frances Hannon
Cathy Burzac
Darren Phillips
Sound Editors
Allan Fowle
Jane Greenwood
Sound Recordists
John Pritchard
Aad Wirtz

Cast
Julia Walters
Monica
Joan Plowright
Mrs. Monro
Jeanne Moreau
Lili
Lena Headey
Margaret
David Threlfall
Syl
Pdraig Casey
Nour
Britta Smith
Mother Joseph
Catherine Schell
Marie-Claire
Piero Sioddi
Ahmed
Sherine El Ansari
Gypsy Girl
Annabel Burton
Margaret as a child
Maggie Stood
Mrs Raffald
John Wood
Robert
David Gant
Gallery Owner
Tommy Duggan
Father O'Flynn
Marlene El Rafale
Fatima
Lamia El Amir
Hala
Roger Lloyd Pack
Derek
Gwyneth Strong
Cynthia
Natalie Flynn
Jennifer
Thomas Lawrence
Christopher

7,000 feet
(at 25 fps) 79 minutes

Croydon, the 1950s. Margaret, in her early 20s, is engaged to marry the older Syl, her life-long neighbour and the only son of the elderly Mrs Monro. Dreading this unwanted union, Margaret dreams of her time in Egypt - a holiday to improve her French, spent at Marie-Claire's, a friend of her divorced mother, Monica. While there, Margaret fell in love with Nour, Marie-Claire's son, and possibly lost her virginity to him - an act which may have been responsible for her approaching Sister Juliet at the local Egyptian convent, with a view to becoming a nun.

Margaret is bored and desperate, but things begin to look up when another of Monica's old friends, the exotic Lili, arrives with her husband Robert. Robert has come to set up an exhibition of his paintings of Egypt: Lili is to help with the wedding. It turns out that Lili is known to Mrs Monro, who once caught her late husband and Lili in *flagrante delicto* in her own living room. This incident does not, however, stop both women resolving over several drinking sessions to stop Margaret

and Syl being wed, both recognising that the former has no love for the latter - a point that Monica and Syl refuse to acknowledge.

Matters come to a head after Robert's opening night, when his paintings turn out not only to allude to his affair with Marie-Claire, but also to depict a notorious local haunt, the 'crocodile pool'. The sight of it causes Margaret to faint as she recalls helping a naked Nour dispose of a bloodied gypsy girl's body into the pool - a collusion which remains undiscovered. Despite this setback, plans for the wedding go ahead with the news that Margaret's father Derek will after all be able to attend, in company with his wife and two young children. Before their arrival, Lili tells Monica and Margaret that if the cacti in the summer-house flower, it will augur good fortune for Margaret and Syl. On the day of the wedding, Lili announces that the cacti have indeed flowered and insists that everybody witness this sight after breakfast. As the guests make their way to the summer-house, they are shocked to find a half-naked Lili clearly making love to Syl.

Some time in the future, Margaret, now a nun in Egypt, is convinced that only God could have sent her Lili, for who else could have conceived a wedding present so original as the scene in the summerhouse?

With its scrupulous period details and classy cast (Plowright, Threlfall, Walters and a real scoop, Jeanne Moreau), *The Clothes in the Wardrobe* is a typical example of what the BBC does best - namely, adapting a living novelist's work, which shies away from contemporary, and possibly dangerous, issues. However, like the recently broadcast *Memento Mori* (based on a Muriel Spark novel), *Wardrobe* has a genuine sediment of sourness at the bottom of its champagne production values.

This Screen Two production is a faithful, albeit selectively telescoped rendition of Alice Thomas Ellis's *Summerhouse* trilogy (*The Clothes in the*



A bit of a do: Lena Headey

Wardrobe, *The Skeleton in the Cupboard*, *The Fly in the Ointment*), each written from a different person's perspective. Martin Sherman's extremely deft adaptation uses the first novel (Margaret's perspective) to frame events which are often outlined in other parts of the trilogy. This is particularly true of Mrs Monro, who remains an unrattled skeleton in Margaret's *Wardrobe*, but becomes an essential part of the proceedings in Sherman's version. There is the added bonus that Plowright's scenes with Moreau provide a queen's ransom in acting honours and acidic aphorisms ("she's a little low-key to be anaemic") as well as an unhealthy quota of alcohol consumption.

The result, miraculously, is a more cinematic adaptation than any reader of the novels could have hoped to see. The watershed in Margaret's development, the murder of the gypsy girl, is outlined very matter-of-factly in the book, and never questioned. However, Sherman and director Waris Hussein go to great pains to establish the hallucinatory qualities of Margaret's recollections early on in the film. The flashbacks create a mosaic of a dream-mystery which only fully reveals itself after a visual nudge from Robert's paintings.

When allied with Sister Juliet's warning to Margaret that "Egypt is by nature overdramatic, filled with unreliable visions", real doubt is cast on whether there was ever a killing in the first place. Margaret's motivation to become a nun thus provides a much richer motif in the film. Is it simply a result of guilt at transferring her love from God to Nour, an unholy aberration in foreign climes? Is it her way to deal with possible abuse from her father as a child? (Derek, Monica alleges to Lili, was "found in disarray" in Margaret's bedroom when she was four.) Or is it simply a quintessentially English price paid for disturbing the status quo? "Nothing will change, it will always be the same," announces the dismally conservative Syl to Margaret - a platitude which she finds unable to dispel on her own, but explicitly acknowledges at the end whilst reflecting on her debt to Lili ("For surely to make a great fool and spectacle of yourself for the sake of another is a form of martyrdom").

By refusing to fully elaborate on these musings, *Wardrobe* not only complements Ellis' métier of irony and understatement but also plays obligingly into what must have been very real budget constraints. For despite the fact that virtually every character's life hinges on events that occurred either in the past (Monica's divorce, Robert's affair, Mrs Monro's awareness of her husband's infidelity) or on foreign soil, Ellis and the film-makers ensure that the real action determinedly unfolds in Croydon. Suburbia thus humbles the widescreen desert spaces of *Lawrence of Arabia* and *The Sheltering Sky* in a film which was always destined for the small screen.

Farrah Anwar

Dead Romantic

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Patrick Lau

Distributor
BBC TV
Production Company
BBC Pebble Mill
For Screen Two
Executive Producer
Barry Hanson
Producer
Chris Griffin
Associate Producer
Andrew Smith
Location Manager
Sam Hill
Casting Advisor
Marilyn Johnson
Assistant Directors
Alastair Duncan
Gareth Williams
Peter Eryl Lloyd
Screenplay
Jan Ashdown
Based on the novel
by Simon Brett
Director of Photography
John Kenway
In colour
Visual Effects Designer
Sinclair Brebner
Graphic Design
Teresa Olds
Editor
Oral Norrie Ottey
Production Designer
Ian Ashurst
Music
Richard Harvey
Costume Design
Kathryn Ayerst
Make-up Design
Gill Hughes
Sound Editor
Jacques Leronde
Sound Recordist
Richard Reynolds
Sound Re-recordist
Aad Wirtz
Stunt Arranger
Gareth Milne
Stunts
Nick Hobbs

Cast
Janet McTeer
Madeleine
Clive Wood
Bernard
Jonny Lee Miller
Paul
Eliot Gray
Mrs Grigson
Simon Rasse
Julian
Bernice Stagers
Annie
Robin Weaver
Debbie
Sarah Bernhard
Laura
Olivia Pagan
Mrs Franklin
Rowland Davies
Lecturer
Barbara Keogh
Mrs Rankin
Ralph Artiss
Keith
Caroline O'Neill
Housewife
Rupert Degas
Tony
Peter Morston
Sam
Pamela Pitchford
Doris
Debbie Finch
Mandy
Richard Cusibson
CID Officer
Chris Matthews
Traffic P.C.
Lawrence Harrington
Gun Shop Assistant
Zelah Clarke
Shop Assistant
Holly Wilson
Nurse

8,000 feet
(at 25 fps) 89 minutes

Madeleine is a teacher at the Julian Garrett School of Language and Literature, a fee-paying establishment in Cheltenham which offers tutorials to foreign businessmen and A-level English students. Single, in her late 30s, she is devoted to the Romantic poets - Keats, Wordsworth and all. A new term is starting, Julian Garrett wants to reduce the amount of time the school spends teaching English literature, and instead concentrate on attracting foreign English-language pupils to generate revenue. Madeleine argues against such a policy, backed up by Bernard, a shy colleague. Madeleine and Bernard strike up a rapport, meeting first for a drink, then for supper, and finally agreeing to spend a weekend away in the countryside. They have to behave circumspectly: Bernard is married, with an invalid wife. Madeleine, for her part, enjoys the romance of a secret affair.

One of Madeleine's more problematic pupils is Paul, a lanky adolescent, re-taking his English A-level and living at home with his sickly mother. Madeleine gives Paul regular tutorials on the Romantic poets. He is a promising student, but suffers from acute "growing pains": teased and bullied by his friends, who taunt him for his lack of sexual knowledge, and inhabiting his own world of junk food, videos ▶

◀ and pornography, Paul decides he has fallen in love with Madeleine.

Periodically, news filters through to Cheltenham of a brutal sex killer who murders Soho prostitutes; nobody thinks the news concerns them. Madeleine arranges for a teenage friend to spend the weekend at her house; armed with an alibi, she sets off for her liaison with Bernard. Paul has discovered where she is heading and, borrowing his mother's car, sets off in pursuit. He is drinking heavily and, after being chased by the police, crashes into a ditch. At the hideaway cottage, Madeleine and Bernard discuss Romantic literature over a candlelit dinner, and then retire to bed. As they prepare to make love, Bernard suddenly becomes violent, attempting to rape and then to strangle Madeleine. She gets hold of his knife and stabs him to death. Cleaning up the house and disposing of the body, she doesn't notify anybody of Bernard's death. Protected by a cast-iron alibi, Madeleine returns to the school as if nothing had happened. Only Paul realises what really happened, and he is not about to reveal his secret.

A cosy Cotswolds murder mystery, adapted from Simon Brett's novel, *Dead Romantic* is yet another testament to the English obsession with gentrified crime fables (this, after all, is the nation that invented Cluedo). As the quaintly punning title might suggest, the film comes laced with references to Byron and Keats, and strives to gild its sometimes bloody narrative with all the trappings of 'good taste'. Director Patrick Lau, perhaps abashed by the regular eruptions of misogynistic violence which disfigure his tale, fussily depicts elegant Georgian houses and thatched cottages and has his characters, most of them English language teachers, recite as many lines of poetry as possible. Before embarking on what proves to be a fatal romantic weekend, Madeleine goes on a prolonged shopping spree in Laura Ashley; on the verge of the film's grisly denouement, she reads from Emily Dickinson's selected verse. This may be a slasher movie, but it aspires to be an upmarket one, with plenty of cultural capital behind it. It is desperately short of any irony or wit, though.

The film is largely set in Cheltenham, the nice English town which revealed a less palatable underside last year when John Taylor, the black Tory candidate in the General Election, was abused and attacked by his own party. *Dead Romantic* is effective when hinting at the prejudice and murderous passions percolating away behind the town's sleepy facade. Janet McTeer gives a striking performance as Madeleine, a teacher compensating for a dreary, solitary existence by immersing herself in poetry, and trying to devise a secret life of romance and illicit passion.

Defiantly uncinematic and top-heavy with literary encrustation, *Dead Romantic* seems no different from a host of other middle-brow, small-screen adaptations of crime fiction. The least you would expect of a whodunnit set in a quiet English country town is that it would be well constructed. But *Dead Romantic* is full of lacunae. Thrown into the film at 15-minute intervals are scenes in which an unknown murderer, dressed in a mackintosh and carrying a brown bag, takes the train to London and murders a Soho prostitute. These moments are always announced by the same high-angle establishing shot of Brewer Street, and filmed in lurid, sub-*Peeping Tom* style from the killer's point of view. At first, it is far from clear how the murders impinge on the rest of the story, which is mainly preoccupied with the emotional problems of its three protagonists. Lau makes occasional token attempts to crank up the suspense, defying us to guess the killer's identity but dropping clues so heavily-handedly that the answer is obvious from the start. A crude cut from a dead prostitute to Paul at home, brandishing a knife while watching a porn movie, frames him so blatantly that he is clearly not the murderer. By the same token, sensitive, caring Bernard is the prime suspect, because he is such an unlikely one.

Most of the characters are bored rigid by the daily grind of small town life. The audience is liable to share their feeling of ennui, and to lose patience with a script abounding in loose ends. Ultimately, *Dead Romantic* is mired in that precious provincial suburbia it depicts so accurately.

Geoffrey Macnab



Ghastly good taste: Clive Wood, Janet McTeer

TV FILM

Maria's Child

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Malcolm McKay

Distributor	Rudi Davis
BBC TV	Jessica
Production Company	Gary Mavers
BBC TV	Harry
For Screen Two	Mick Woodson
Producer	Roland
Kenith Trodd	Bob Goody
Associate Producer	Comptee
Matthew Hamilton	Ricardo Aliaga
Production Manager	The Spainard
Linda Buxton	Kathryn Hunter
Location Manager	Margarita Guzman
Tim Stevenson	Senta Indrani
Costing	Christina Ramirez
Corinne Rodriguez	Ray Marloni
Assistant Directors	Spanish Producer
Susanna Shaw	Robert Purvis
John Spencer	Stixman
Mervyn Gill-Dougherty	Alec McCowne
Screenplay	Father McCarthy
Malcolm McKay	Paul McKay
Director of Photography	Young Priest
Sean Van Hales	Anna Korwin
In colour	Guiseppina
Editor	Michael Mollinger
John Stothart	Antonio
Production Designer	Anita Zagaria
Marjorie Pratt	Bruna
Music	Avril Clark
Philip Appleby	Isabella
Choreographer	Guido Adorni
Anthony Van Laast	Enrico
Costume Designer	Nancy Norvinn
Anushia Nieradzik	Luisa
Make-up	Anna Mazzotti
Dorka Nieradzik	Gabriella
Sound Editors	Marcello Magni
Helen Whitehead	Giovanni
Mark Gravil	Fiona Shaw
Sound Recordists	Pauline
Hugh Strain	David Belcher
Clive Derbyshire	Mr Boyd
Cast	Usha Patel
Yolanda Vazquez	Sally
Maria	Richard Cottan
David O'Hara	Anaesthetist
Michael	Lisa Trammott
Jonmaine Naval-Baxter	Scrub Nurse
Maria's Child	Erika Spotswood
Sophie Okonedo	Nurse
Melanie	
Linda Davidson	
Danielle	

8,895 feet
(at 25 fps) 93 minutes

A man and a woman have unprotected sex in a garden at night while a party goes on indoors. In voice-over, the woman, Maria, explains to her doctor Pauline how two strangers came to be doing this together. Afterwards, feeling guilty at having betrayed her boyfriend Michael, she is greeted by a surprise birthday celebration. Cutting her cake, she wishes for a baby. That night, back at her flat, Michael, an actor, coerces her into making love with him, with no protection. Maria soon discovers that she is pregnant, but can't be sure which of the two men is the father. She decides not to keep the baby. After a performance with her dance group, Maria discovers that there are parts available in a new musical, *La Passionaria*.

Back home, Maria starts to hear a child's voice pre-empting her thoughts and realises it is her child talking to her. She goes to see Michael rehearsing for a production of *Miss Julie*, but when it becomes clear that he is flirting with Jessica, his leading lady, she rushes off in tears. At the audition for *La Passionaria*, Maria is convinced she has made a good impression. She visits her sister Gabrielle, who is being fitted for a wed-

ding dress, but their conversation ends in arguments. On a whim, she goes to confession for the first time in two years. As she says her Hail Marys in penance, the child's voice repeats her words. Having resolved to make it up with Michael and keep the baby, Maria goes to the first night of his play, but the production upsets her and afterwards, Jessica flirts openly with Michael. That night, after making him confess to sleeping with Jessica, Maria tells Michael she is pregnant by someone else and throws him out.

At the second audition for *La Passionaria*, Maria glimpses the man who may be her child's father - he is one of the play's Spanish 'angels' (producers). Called in for an interview, Maria admits to the choreographer, Margarita, that she is pregnant. Alone, Maria imagines herself dancing with her erstwhile Spanish lover. She goes to stay at her Italian parents' house for her sister's wedding; Gabrielle's wedding dress rips at the altar, Maria starts throwing up and, harassed by her grandmother, admits to being pregnant. The next day, the priest gives a sermon on the sin of abortion; furious, Maria runs out of church. When she refuses to guarantee that she will have the child, her father throws her out of the house. As she leaves, she is stopped by an aunt who tells her that her mother once had an abortion. Back home, Maria discovers that she has not been offered a part in *La Passionaria*. She meets Michael but refuses to commit herself to him. Lying in a hospital bed, about to be wheeled in for her abortion, she reaches the end of her narration to Pauline. After the operation, she can no longer hear the child's voice, but days later, walking in the park, she is overjoyed to hear it again.

Maria's Child is the second in Malcolm McKay's loose trilogy of films - the first was *Redemption* - based around the theme of forgiveness. The key to the issue lies in whether or not Maria can forgive herself if she doesn't keep the baby that has become a real being to her. To its credit, the film tackles the abortion debate head-on and in some detail. Initially, while the focus is on Maria as a single working woman whose career will be jeopardised by a child, the film circles around her complicated, conflicting emotions; she battles with old dependencies and tries to reconcile what she feels she should want as an independent woman with peer pressure and what she really wants. Later, when she is thrust into family life, the emphasis switches to the simpler 'moral' issues raised through her fiercely Catholic family. Representing everything anti-abortionist, they come up with angry, traditional arguments about sin and murder. That ideology is seen, through Maria's mother's story, to be riddled with hypocrisy and suffering.

But *Maria's Child* is nothing if not complex - which is perhaps why it also presents another, more expedient Catholic argument. For as much as it is bounded by an Italian culture that rep-

resents everything that is by turn repressive (religion) and comical (the farcical family wedding scenes), it is also heavily infused with Spanish culture. This, by contrast, is presented as liberating (the flamenco) and free-thinking (Margarita tells Maria that God allows a woman to choose whether or not to keep her baby).

The main problem is that the film crams in too much and presents it too disparately. In an hour and a half, it moves between psychological drama, quasi-documentary realism, farce, high drama and a certain sort of mysticism. If that's not enough, it spoons a generous portion of symbolic imagery over the whole brew. Mary/Maria, visited by the angel Gabriel/the Spanish angel, becomes pregnant with a marvellous child that stays with her even when it's no longer physically there. Maria, a dancer in a sleazy club, draws inevitable comparisons too with Mary Magdalene. Then again, as a brave woman setting out to do something on her own terms, Maria is not unlike the heroine of *La Passionaria*. And finally, it's hard not to link Maria's occasional desperation with that of Strindberg's Miss Julie, while the scene in the play to which she responds so strongly depicts the shedding of blood of an innocent little bird. Although all this might just work in an overtly hyper-real movie, it soon becomes bogged down in a morass of styles.

Nor is it helped by a script that at times is painfully thin. There are too many musically-backed linking scenes, while the way that the narration appears and disappears at random highlights its weakness as a device for explication. Even so, *Maria's Child* is often an intelligent film, with too much rather than too little to show for itself. Yolanda Vazquez makes a sympathetic heroine, convincingly determined and desperate by turn. And she's backed up by strong performances from Rudi Davies as the greedy, leering Jessica and David O'Hara's well meaning but essentially egotistical Michael. In fact, for the film's real pay-off, you have to leave aside the worthy forgiveness and abortion angles, and go straight to those scenes between the three in which sex and jealousy and manipulation collide.

Amanda Lipman



Nearly immaculate: Yolanda Vazquez

TV FILM

Voices in the Garden

United Kingdom/France 1992

Director: Pierre Boutron

Distributor

BBC TV

Production Companies

Gaumont Television/
Picture Base
International
For BBC Films (Screen
Two)/Antenne 2/La Sept

Executive Producer

Mark Shivas

Producers

Peter Jefferies
Christian Charret

Co-production Executives

Michael Custrance
Sandra D'Abville

Production Manager

Serge Toubol

Location Manager

Jacques Frederix

Post-production Manager

Sophie Pelerin

Costing

Françoise Menidrey
Alma Belard

Assistant Directors

Alexandre Pidoux
Joanna Dumont

Screenplay

Lee Langley
Based on the novel
by Dirk Bogarde

Director of Photography

Dominique Brabant
in colour

Camera Operators

Claude Butteau
Roger Dorieu

Editors

Robert Coursez
Peter Coulson

Production Designer

Emile Ghigo

Music

Roland Romanelli

Costume Design

Françoise Guegan

Make-up

Mario Michisanti

Sound Recordist

Tony Jackson

Sound Re-recordist

Patrick Collet

Foley Artist

Andre Naudin

Stunts

Pierre Rosso

Cast

Anouk Aimée

Cuckoo Peverall

Joss Ackland

Sir Charles (Archie)

Peverall

Samuel West

Mark

Kashia Figura

Leni

Gayle Hunnicutt

Minna

Andre Oumanski

Grotorosso

Maï Morveas

Shelley

Lisa Ray

Bruna

Isabelle Mammam

Maria

Maurice Zeffirey

Michael Davies

Jorge Falk

Loe Ann Graham

Andreas Gales

Alra Boehbach

Ross Graham

Party Guests

8,047 feet

(at 25 fps) 86 minutes

The South of France. Gathering rocks into a shoulder bag, a middle-aged woman throws herself into the sea, but her suicide attempt is foiled by the intervention of a young male sunbather. He takes her back to her luxurious villa, where her identity is revealed: she is Cuckoo, French wife of English historian Sir Charles Peverall, whom she calls Archie. The handsome youth who rescued her is Mark, an English backpacker. Having sworn him to secrecy about the incident, Cuckoo invites him to stay the night. He is joined the next day by his German girlfriend Leni.

Over dinner with their guests, Archie implies that his spouse's nickname refers to past infidelities, while she is scornful about the 20 years he has spent writing a book on Napoleon II. The youngsters are persuaded to stay until the weekend, and Archie begins to suspect that Cuckoo has designs on Mark, whose good looks are also admired by Cuckoo's American cousin Minna, who visits with her Italian film producer husband. The latter appalls Archie with his ideas for a screen biopic of Napoleon II as Cuckoo throws a garden party in honour of her guests. During the afternoon Mark disgraces himself with the mogul's brash young mistress, Archie surmises that Leni is not all she appears, and the hostess



In Cuckoo's nest: Samuel West, Kashia Figura

retires to her room in dismay.

However, the disruption brings the various parties closer together as the deceptions blighting each relationship are disclosed. Leni reveals to Mark that she's not an orphan but a German countess; Mark in turn relays to Archie Cuckoo's news that she's seriously ill - her recent trip to London was not the illicit rendezvous her husband had suspected but actually a medical appointment. Destination uncertain, Mark and Leni go on their way, leaving Cuckoo and Archie to face a bleak future with a rekindled spirit of togetherness.

Adapted from the novel by Dirk Bogarde, this BBC Two co-production with Gaumont Television is just the kind of civilised Eurodrama in which the actor-turned-writer might himself once have starred. The marital tensions between a comfortably-off Anglo-French couple on the Riviera bring to mind Tavernier's *These Foolish Things*, while the cross-generational yearnings and underlying atmosphere of physical decay cannot help but recall *Death in Venice*. And the post-crisis unfolding of fraught interrelationships suggests nothing so much as a sun-soaked continental *Accident*.

Such intertextual playfulness adds to the enjoyment of watching Pierre Boutron's film, even if the weighty comparisons tend not to work in its favour. To be sure, the plot's careful peeling away of layers of intrigue and deceit is painstakingly achieved. The anticipated moment of recklessness between Anouk Aimée's decorously pained Cuckoo and Samuel West's bronzed house guest never quite comes to pass; Joss Ackland's clamped-down arch-romantic finds an unexpected, tender moment of communication with the similarly adrift Kashia Figura as Leni; and the final tally of revela-

tions linking the diverse members of this unlikely quartet is neatly and equally shared out. The problem is that it's all a little too pat to allow the characters to live and breathe with emotional verisimilitude. Found sleeping in a Paris doorway, later discovered to be a German countess fleeing the family seat, the enigmatic Leni seems more celluloid than flesh and blood, and Cuckoo's barely perceptible but deeply tragic ailment is the kind of affliction which all too frequently strikes down glamorous, mature film actresses.

Punctuated by outbursts from Roland Romanelli's mournful clarinet or wistful piano, the dialogue too suffers from a surfeit of over-sculpted melancholy. "A brief, bright light and the long dying fall," intones Ackland, relating Archie's obsession with Napoleon's ill-fated son - dead at 21 - and rather too much is made of his historian's obsession with the crumbling processes of age. With the soundbites from Swinburne and quotations from Proust, it's surely overstating the case when the Peveralls' suffocating marriage is compared without a hint of irony to the ruins of Pompeii.

Over-eager to measure up to the likes of Losey et al, *Voices in the Garden* strains too hard to prove how meaningful it is. As the camera glides elegantly among eminently attractive Mediterranean settings, the end result offers a lush, over-textured, but eventually wearing pleasure. The most touching scenes are the simplest: Archie delivering his wife's breakfast tray himself; Cuckoo repairing silently to her room when a raucous garden party proves too much. These isolated, unadorned moments speak more truthfully than the rather arch surrounding ornamentation. Aimée underplays gracefully, without contrivance, affectingly.

Trevor Johnston

VIDEO

Mark Kermode reviews this month's rental releases and laser discs, and Peter Dean new retail videos

Reviews in Monthly Film Bulletin (MFB) and Sight and Sound are cited in parentheses. A retail video that has previously been reviewed in the rental section will simply be listed and the film review reference given in parentheses

Rental

The Adjuster

Canada 1991/Tartan Video TVT 020R
Certificate 18 Director Atom Egoyan
See 'Wind Up' on page 62.
(S&S June 1992)

Alien 3

USA 1992/FoxVideo 5593
Certificate 18 Director David Fincher
Dreary and incoherent conclusion to the otherwise extraordinary *Alien* movies. Sigourney Weaver and an alien crash-land on a planet populated by convicts. Chaos ensues with a lot of people getting eaten. (S&S August 1992)

Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter

USA 1990/EV EVV 1259
Certificate 15 Director Jon Amiel
Marvellous adaptation of Mario Vargas Llosa's novel about a romance which blossoms through the machinations of a radio play. Keanu Reeves and Barbara Hershey are enjoyable as the lovers, but master storyteller Peter Falk steals the show. (S&S October 1991)

Beethoven

USA 1992/CIC Video VHA 1580
Certificate U Director Brian Levant
Although promising to be an ordeal - a cute big dog causes mayhem in an uptight family household - *Beethoven* turns out to be a treat. Charles Grodin is perfect as the stuffy patriarch ripe for liberation. (S&S July 1992)

Double X

United Kingdom 1991/DD Video DD 550
Certificate 15 Director Shani S. Grewal
Awful crime thriller about dishonour among thieves. Norman Wisdom and Bernard Hill struggle to inject life into the proceedings, but it's a losing battle. (S&S July 1992)

Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer

USA 1986/Electric Video EP 0021
Certificate 18 Director John McNaughton
The 80s' most important, honest and uncompromising portrayal of urban alienation. McNaughton's masterpiece may have been maimed by the censor's scissors (see 'Seconds out', opposite), but the film retains the power to terrify and enlighten. (S&S July 1991)



Bone of contention: 'Beethoven'



L'amour fou: 'The Lover' with Jane March, Tony Leung

Immaculate Conception

United Kingdom 1991/
20.20 Vision NVT 16895
Certificate 18 Director Jamil Dehlavi
A childless couple attempt to overcome their lack of fertility by spending a weekend at a Karachi temple. Dehlavi's feature debut is a strange cocktail which blends melodrama and hysteria. (S&S September 1992)

Lethal Weapon 3

USA 1992/Warner PEV 12475
Certificate 15 Director Richard Donner
What began as action-with-comedy has now turned into comedy-with-action in this third instalment of the successful series. Mel Gibson and Danny Glover continue to blow up everything. Rene Russo adds the female interest and Joe Pesci provides comic relief. (S&S August 1992)

The Lover (L'Amant)

France/United Kingdom 1992/Guild 8712
Certificate 18 Director Jean-Jacques Annaud
Flawed (but by no means dreadful) adaptation of Marguerite Duras' novel about a young girl's affair with a Chinese man. Jeanne Moreau's seductive voice-over is more captivating than the visuals, but Jane March's central performance is laudably engaging. (S&S July 1992)

Paradise

USA 1991/Buena Vista D312582
Certificate PG
Director Mary Agnes Donoghue
Uninteresting remake of Jean-Loup Hubert's *Le Grand Chemin*, brought to its knees by Melanie Griffith's interminable whining as a bereaved mother. (S&S July 1992)

The Power of One

USA 1991/Warner PEV 12411
Certificate 15 Director John G. Avildsen
A white orphan combats racism in South Africa. An uninspired and meandering film interspersed with scenes of rabble-rousing violence. (S&S September 1991)

Sleepwalkers

USA 1992/Columbia TriStar 14587
Certificate 18 Director Mick Garris
Limp adaptation of a Stephen King story,

lacking in thrills, narrative coherence and interesting characters. A schoolgirl (Mädchen Amick) falls for a new kid in town (Brian Krause) who turns out to be a shape-shifter. (S&S August 1992)

Traces of Red

USA 1992/EV EVV 1237
Certificate 15 Director Andy Wolk
Unintentionally funny *noir* erotic thriller, badly directed and played in a camp style by James Belushi and Lorraine Bracco. An apparently dead man relives the twisted experiences which brought him to the grave. (S&S February 1993)

Rental premiere

Coopersmith: Sweet Scent of Murder

USA 1992/CIC Video VHA 1549
Certificate 15 Director Peter Crane
Producer Christopher Seiter Screenplay Peter S. Fischer Lead Actors Grant Show, Colleen Coffey, Clark Johnson, James McDonnell 80 minutes
A heroic insurance investigator unravels the secrets behind the murder of a stock-car racer's wealthy wife. An unremarkable TV movie.

Critters 4: Critters in Space

USA 1992/EV EVV 1236
Certificate 15 Director Rupert Harvey
Producers Barry Oppen, Rupert Harvey Screenplay Joseph Lyle, David Schow Lead Actors Don Oppen, Paul Whitthorne, Angela Bassett, Brad Dourif 90 minutes
Tag-lined "In space, no one can smell rotten eggs", this fourth instalment in the sci-fi/horror spoof takes unsubtle swipes at *Alien*. The green gunk flies again when Charlie McFadden is intercepted in a frozen space pod by a salvage crew.

Excessive Force

USA 1992/EV EVV 1235
Certificate TBC Director Jon Hess Producers Thomas Ian Griffith, Erwin Stoff Screenplay Thomas Ian Griffith Lead Actors Thomas Ian Griffith, Lance Henriksen, Burt Young, Charlotte Lewis, James Earl Jones 85 minutes
Martial arts action movie which caused

Seconds out

Hampstead video store Vid Biz had unusual Saturday morning help on 16 January. Regular members, curious why their manager was joined by an over-inquisitive middle-aged man, were bemused to discover it was James Ferman, the country's chief censor.

Ferman was there in part to understand better why the video industry still holds out against using the 12 certificate. Brought into being four years ago to allow *Batman* to meet its target cinema audience, the 12 certificate has not yet been taken up by the video industry. Cinema films rated 12 are simply upgraded to a 15 video certificate, as in the case of *Batman*, or reduced to a PG, as was *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* - on its distributor's request. The Costner picture had to have 20 seconds cut to gain its PG rating - two swear words, a detail of the witch's arm being lost, a couple of bloody close-ups and the 'springing open' of legs in a rape sequence. Given this confusing scenario, it might well take the censor himself to explain to Vid Biz's 12 to 15 year-olds why they are breaking the law by trying to rent *Batman* when they have already seen it in the cinema.

Double standards

"Another thing which hit Mr Ferman was the way parents rent out 18-rated films for their children," says Vid Biz owner Michael Senker. This lack of control once a video has left the shop, and the extra control the spectator has over the image through rewind and freeze-framing, have led to stricter censorship for video, and hence to a fixed double standard between cinema films and the versions you can see at home. The Video Recordings Act (1984) gave Ferman's British Board of Film Classification (BBFC)

statutory powers for the first time, and also the directive to determine "what is suitable for viewing in the home."

From the armchair viewpoint, Ferman most recently cut *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* by 48 seconds for home-viewing. Most of the cutting was from the camcorder sequence in which we see Henry and Otis replaying their home video of the sexual violation and killing of a family. Ferman describes *Henry* as a "morally blank" film to which spectators bring their own morality, and subsequent outrage. On the advice of forensic experts, it was decided to trim the scene so it could no longer be a potential turn-on for a small number who might be unable to bring morals to bear on the film, and might enjoy the images replayed over and over much as Henry and Otis do. If the scene had appeared in a film with a moral rather than amoral structure, it's conceivable the board could have passed it uncut - context and precedent being the two chief guidelines it works to.

Also important is the effect an audience can have on the spectator's relationship to the image - for example, a horror scene in a cinema with audience laughter may be experienced differently at home, it is argued. A typical BBFC instruction to the video rights owner may run thus - "Remove woman walking back into bath and pigs eating her," which was one edit necessary for *Evilspeak* to get an 18 video certificate. On a higher-profile film, the BBFC may well negotiate with the director, as was the case with *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. Cut from the video version were the close-ups of the SWAT team being 'kneecapped' by automatic fire. Where the suggested cuts are disregarded by the rights holder, a certificate upgrading

occurs, as with *Die Hard 2* and *Point Break*, both of which were cut 15s in the cinema and uncut 18s on video.

Sadistic violence, household implements used as weapons and martial-arts weaponry all attract careful attention, as do drug-taking and house/car breaking, in which the freeze-frame button may teach a crime. Small cuts were made to *Midnight Run* (De Niro picking the lock of a front door) and *Crocodile Dundee* (partygoer preparing cocaine) to avoid copycatting. But the board's greatest scrutiny is reserved for sexual violence.

Continental drift

Rape scenes shot for titillation and nakedness combined with violence are two examples of scenes where the censors are most likely to use their scissors. Although trigger points are notoriously difficult to determine, there is evidence of a direct causality between on- and off-screen sexual violence, says Ferman. It was violent Euro-porn he most feared would be flooding through relaxed customs this year, undermining his custodial role.

Ferman admits to not cutting sex in 18-rated cinema films, and paying more attention to violence (unlike the 70s, the BBFC no longer receives complaints about sex in the 18 category). Sex is the greatest area of change in the video world, however, exemplified by sex-education videos like *The Lovers Guide*, which has now sold 600,000 copies in the UK. This growing area has been viewed by some industry sources as a toe in the water of continental-style explicitness.

Ferman agrees that 1993 is about "entering the global village" and predicts that parity with the continent in sexual explicitness is inevitable, though the speed of the change is debatable. What is certain is that pressure on him to change with the times is increasing. Unofficial estimates predict there are as many as 20,000 decoders for the hardcore FilmNet channel in the UK, while porn also travels down phonelines to computer terminals, and enters the country through relaxed customs surveillance.

Censors across Europe find the BBFC's censorship of sexual images rather quaint. Most agree that a Euro-certificate is a possibility, but believe that it's up to the UK and Germany to be more permissive, not vice versa. In the interim, Customs and Excise are maintaining that if it's not available here, then it's seizable, although the grey areas of which videos they would and wouldn't seize remain woolly. They can get offenders on an importation rap with an appeal procedure built in should the importer wish to defend the video work.

Customs say, therefore, that a copy of *Henry* with the excised scenes intact would be seizable on obscenity grounds, but then the same thing could happen to Mr Senker's store - the BBFC rating gives no immunity from prosecution. It's almost worth buying a copy and importing it for the test case alone.

consternation at the BBFC because of its excessive violence. Rising karate star Griffith tangles with an assortment of villains. Look out for the wonderfully incoherent sleeve notes.

The Finest Hour

USA 1991/20.20 Vision NVT 18592
Certificate 15 Director Shimon Dotan
Producer Menahem Golan Screenplay Shimon Dotan, Stuart Schoffman
Lead Actors Rob Lowe, Gale Hansen, Tracy Griffith, Ed Lottimer 100 minutes
Gung-ho action adventure involving modern-day heroes, the SEALs (Sea, Air and Land Specialists). Rob Lowe and friends take part in Operation Desert Storm and single-handedly defeat Saddam Hussein.

In the Arms of a Killer

USA 1991/Warner/MGM UA PEV 53089
Certificate 15 Director Robert Collins
Producer Ronald A. Levinson Screenplay Robert Collins Lead Actors Jaclyn Smith, John Spencer, Sandahl Bergman, Michael Nouri 91 minutes
Plodding TV thriller. Feisty New York rookie Maria Quinn (Smith) teams up with a new partner (Spencer) to investigate a drug baron's murder.

The Miller's Edge

USA 1992/VPD AMP 113
Certificate 18 Director Joseph Merhi
Producers Joseph Merhi, Richard Pepin Screenplay Joseph Merhi Lead Actors Wings Hauser, Robert Z'Dar, Karen Black 90 minutes
Wings Hauser, the King of Rental Premiere, just keeps getting better. Trigger-happy cop Jack Saxon's investigations into a counterfeit ring lead him to an old Vietnam vet comrade (the square-jawed Z'Dar). Wanton male bravado, feisty female sidekicks and guns, guns, guns make this top exploitation entertainment.

Maniac Cop 3: Badge of Silence

USA 1992/Medusa MO 352
Certificate 18 Director William Lustig
Producers Joel Soisson, Larry Cohen Screenplay Larry Cohen Lead Actors Robert Z'Dar, Robert Davi, Caitlin Dulany, Gretchen Becker, Paul Gleason 81 minutes
A promising exploitation sequel, laced with Cohen's dark humour, which collapses in its final act into a series of dull stunts. Zombie cop Matt Cordell returns from the grave to claim his bride.

Mystery Date

USA 1991/20.20 Vision NVT 12836
Certificate 15 Director Jonathan Wacks
Producer Cathleen Summers Screenplay Parker Bennett, Terry Runte Lead Actors Ethan Hawke, Teri Polo, Brian McNamara, Fisher Stevens 93 minutes
Lively but predictable teen comedy about a dream date that goes wrong. A few drops of new juice is squeezed out of the hoary mistaken-identities scenario.

Oh, What a Night

Canada 1992/Columbia
TriStar CVT 18593
Certificate 15 Director Eric Till
Producer Peter R. Simpson Screenplay Richard Nielsen Lead Actors Corey Haim, Barbara Williams, Keir Dullea, Andrew Miller 88 minutes
Teenager Eric Hansen (Corey Haim) learns about life and love from an



'Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer': could the video be subject to prosecution?

outlandish rogue. 50s nostalgia, a witty script and the obligatory bouncy soundtrack create a winning whimsy of a movie.

The Opposite Sex

USA 1992/Guild 8691

Certificate 15 Director Matthew Meshekoﬀ
Producers Robert F. Newmyer, Stanley M. Brooks
Screenplay Noah Stern
Lead Actors Arye Gross, Courteney Cox, Kevin Pollak, Julie Brown 83 minutes

Substandard love comedy, shamelessly stealing from the wonderful *When Harry Met Sally* and from *About Last Night...* Two lecherous young men find their friendship in jeopardy when one of them settles down with his dream woman.

The Pamela Principal

USA 1992/VPD IMP 116

Certificate 18 Director Toby Phillips
Producers Andrew Garroni, Gregory Hippolyte
Screenplay Toby Phillips, Alan Gries, Robyn Sullivent
Lead Actors Troy Donahue, Frank Pesce, J.K. Dumont, Veronica Cash, Shelby Lane 92 minutes

Despite Hippolyte's production credit, Phillips' tale of a married man led astray by a young temptress lacks the usual pop-promo sheen. Donahue is endearing as the middle-aged lead trapped in a doomed relationship. The sex sequences appear to have been heavily cut.

A Private Matter

USA 1992/Columbia TriStar CVT 15351
Certificate PG Director Joan Micklin Silver
Producer David C. Thomas
Screenplay William Nicholson
Lead Actors Sissy Spacek, Aidan Quinn, Estelle Parsons, Sheila McCarthy 89 minutes

Grim true-life story set in 1962, but boasting a contemporary political theme. A young expectant mother (Spacek) fights for the right to have an abortion when faced with the fact that her unborn child could be crippled by thalidomide. Excellent performances by Spacek and Quinn.

Prototype

USA 1992/20.20 Vision NVT 17039
Certificate 18 Director Phillip Roth
Producer Gian-Carlo Scanduzzi
Screenplay Phillip Roth
Lead Actors Lane Lenhart, Robert Tossberg, Brenda Swanson, Paul Coulj 94 minutes

Shambolic but sporadically entertaining *RoboCop* rip-off. A wheelchair-bound ex-soldier offers his body for cybernetic regeneration to win back his lost love, but in the process is programmed to exterminate her. Cheap sci-fi fun.

Rage and Honour II: Hostile Take-over

USA 1992/Columbia TriStar MC 384
Certificate 18 Director Guy Norris
Producers Donald Paul Pemrick, Kevin Reidy
Screenplay Louis Sun, Steven Reich
Lead Actors Cynthia Rothrock, Richard Norton, Patrick Muldoon-Francis, Tumbuan-Ron Vreeken 93 minutes

Taking the action from LA to Jakarta, karate couple Cynthia Rothrock and Richard Norton take on more criminals. Although not a patch on Jackie Chan's masterpieces, Norris' movies are saved by Rothrock, whose charm (and haircuts) improve each time.

Sexual Response

USA 1992/Columbia TriStar 18637
Certificate 18 Director Yaky Yoshia



Magic Roundabout: Dominique Labourier, Juliet Berto in 'Céline and Julie Go Boating'

Producer Ashok Amritraj
Screenplay Brent Morris, Eric Diamond
Lead Actors Shannon Tweed, Catherine Oxenberg, Emile Levisetti, Vernon Wells 90 minutes

A sexy radio agony aunt (Tweed) is seduced by an enigmatic caller and becomes embroiled in an affair with a sculptor that sparks a risible murder mystery.

Tales From The Crypt: Volume III

USA 1992/Warner PEV 35320
Certificate 18 Directors Howard Deutch, Walter Hill, Arnold Schwarzenegger
Producer William Teitler
Screenplay Andy Wolk, Richard Tuggle, Michael Taav, Mae Woods, Walter Hill
Lead Actors Demi Moore, William Hickey, Kelley Preston, Lance Henriksen 90 minutes

Three more classic horror yarns adapted from Bill Gaines' comics. In 'Dead Right' a young woman marries a fat slob for his money; 'The Switch' is a tale of body swapping; and a limb-losing game of poker is played in 'Cutting Cards'.

The Toy Maker

USA 1991/Hi-Fiers HFV 8227
Certificate 18 Director Martin Kitrosser
Producers Brian Yuzna, Richard N. Gladstein
Screenplay Martin Kitrosser, Brian Yuzna
Lead Actors Jane Higginson, Tracey Faim, Brian Bremer, Mickey Rooney 87 minutes

Various billed as *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night 4* and *Toy Boy* during its production, this horror spoof finds producer-writer Yuzna paying the rent but failing to exploit the imagination evident in *Society*. A young kid is terrorised by a demonic toy maker.

Treacherous Crossing

USA 1992/CIC Video VHB 2655
Certificate PG Director Tony Wharmby
Producer Bob Roe
Screenplay Elisa Bell, based on the radio play *Cabin B-13* by John Dickson Carr
Lead Actors Lindsay Wagner, Angie Dickinson, Grant Show, Joseph Bottoms 84 minutes

Innocuous TV adaptation of murder-mystery radio play. A newly-wed heiress loses her husband and her sanity on a honeymoon cruise.

With Savage Intent

USA 1992/VPD AMP 115
Certificate 15 Director Michael Tuchner
Producer Robert Huddleson
Screenplay

Daniel Freudenberger
Lead Actors Robert Foxworth, Howard Rollins, Maureen O'Sullivan, Ronny Cox 95 minutes

Dull, true-life TV movie about a woman who is assaulted by a man who turns out to be a police officer.

Retail

Les Amants du Pont-Neuf

France 1991/Artificial Eye ART 047
Price £15.99/Widescreen
Certificate 15 Director Leos Carax
Fanciful romance set among the down-and-outs of Paris, as a painter with failing eyesight falls for a fire-eating punk. Passages of near docu-drama clash with flash set-pieces - including the recreation of Pont-Neuf which helped make this the most expensive French film ever made. Subtitles (S&S September 1992)

The Arrangement

USA 1969/Tartan Video BDV 11284
Price £15.99
Certificate 18 Director Elia Kazan
Kazan directs, produces and scripts from his 1967 novel about an LA advertising executive (Kirk Douglas) who ponders on life, death and the whole damn thing after a failed suicide attempt. Rather dull. (MFB No. 434)

The Aviator's Wife (La Femme de l'aviateur)

France 1981/Connoisseur CRO 105
Price £15.99
Certificate PG Director Eric Rohmer
The first of Rohmer's six 'Comedies and Proverbs' tales takes place in a Paris park as a boy and a girl (Marie Rivière from *The Green Ray*) spy on an airline pilot and his girlfriend. Subtitles (MFB No. 571)

Badlands

USA 1973/Tartan Video BDV 11135
Price £15.99
Certificate 18 Director Terrence Malick
Sissy Spacek and Martin Sheen shine in this movie based on a real-life Bonnie and Clyde case in 50s Dakota. A seminal road movie. (MFB No. 490)

Barton Fink

USA 1991/Columbia TriStar CVR 23240
Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Joel Coen
(S&S February 1992)

Beyond Evil

USA 1980/VIPCO VIP 024 Price £12.99
Certificate 18 Director Herb Freed
John Saxon and Lynda Day George are newlyweds mixing business with pleasure on their tropical island honeymoon. But things go wrong when Lynda's ex-spouse lodges them in a haunted luxurious mansion. (MFB No. 551)

Blanche Fury

UK 1947/Connoisseur CR 102 Price £12.99
Certificate PG Director Marc Allegret
Valerie Hobson plays a woman who marries for money and then has to face the fury of her jealous lover (Stewart Granger). The wonderful photography by Geoffrey Unsworth helps lift the occasional flatness of the film. (MFB No. 171)

Céline and Julie Go Boating (Céline et Julie vont en bateau)

France 1974/Connoisseur CRO 107
Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Jacques Rivette
Two women (a librarian and a nightclub magician) magically meet in a Montmartre park and get caught up in a whirlpool of illusion and role-playing. Rivette's meditation on the nature of fantasy has been called "the most important film since *Citizen Kane*". Subtitles (MFB No. 511)

Delta Force 2: The Colombian Connection

USA 1990/MGM/UA PES 37108
Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Aaron Norris
Chuck Norris ousts Billy Drago's Colombian drug lord in this *Licence to Kill* re-run in which Norris attempts to broaden his acting range. Five people were killed in a helicopter crash during the filming. (S&S May 1991)

Delta Force 3: The Killing Game

USA 1992/MGM/UA PES 32028
Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Sam Firstenberg
Like *The Human Shield* and *The Finest Hour*, this action pic looks to Operation Desert Storm for its inspiration in a tale of a fanatical Arab leader who holds the US to ransom with a nuclear device. (Retail premiere)

Django

Italy 1965/Art House Productions AHP 10001 Price £15.99
Certificate 18 Director Sergio Corbucci
Franco Nero is the 'man with no name' who sets a town ablaze in this influential



Franco Nero in 'Django'

Spaghetti Western. The violence (including a *Reservoir Dogs*-style ear sequence) caused the censors to refuse it a certificate in the UK when it was first released. It has since inspired over 30 sequels including *Django Challenges Sardinia* and *Nude Django*. (MFB No. 625)

Doc Hollywood

USA 1991/Warner PES 12216 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Michael Caton-Jones
(S&S November 1991)

Double Impact

USA 1991/Columbia TriStar CVR 23663 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Sheldon Lettich
(S&S March 1992)

A Good Marriage (Le Beau Mariage)

France 1982/Connoisseur CRO 106 Price £15.99
Certificate PG Director Eric Rohmer
The second film in the 'Comedies and Proverbs' series has Beatrice Romand as a liberated woman who turns out to be an old-fashioned girl at heart. Romand ditches her married lover and sets her sights on a man who unfortunately does not share her feelings about marriage. Subtitles (MFB No. 586)

Guilty by Suspicion

USA 1990/Warner PES 12053 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Irwin Winkler
(S&S June 1991)

Heilraiser

UK 1987/Video Collection VC 3401 Price £12.99/Widescreen
Certificate 18 Director Clive Barker
Impressive cinematic splash for pulp horror novelist Clive Barker. Slick splatter which is surprisingly witty. The tape includes an extra feature - a behind-the-scenes documentary called 'The Art of Horror'. (MFB No. 644)

An Impudent Girl (L'Effrontée)

France 1985/Artificial Eye ART 051 Price £15.99/Widescreen
Certificate 15 Director Claude Miller
Charlotte Gainsbourg shines as the archetypal sulky teenager growing up in a one-café town and looking for a saviour in both a visiting child prodigy pianist and a sailor. Subtitles (MFB No. 631)

Insomnioid

USA 1980/VIPCO VIP 025 Price £12.99
Certificate 18 Director Norman J. Warren
Starring Stephanie Beacham, Judy Geeson and Victoria Tennant, this *Alien* clone has been unavailable on video since its inclusion on the DPP's 1984 list of 'video nasties', but is now being released in its legitimate theatrical cut. (MFB No. 568)

K2

USA 1991/EV EVS 1079 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Franc Roddam
(S&S February 1992)

Lesbian Lyra Shorts:

Can't You Take a Joke/Reservoir/Domestic Bliss/She Don't Fade/Dangerous to Know

Australia/Holland/UK/USA 1984-1991/DTK 002

Certificate 15 Directors Vicki Dunn, Clara Van Gool, Joy Chamberlain, Cheryl Dunye

Two-hour compilation of short films by lesbian film-makers. Highlights include

a tale about a woman who has her sense of humour stolen and hires a private investigator (*Can't You Take a Joke*); a comic dyke soap opera in which a well-ordered home is reduced to chaos (*Domestic Bliss*); and a comedy by Dunye, who sets out to find new ways to meet women (*Dangerous to Know*). (Retail premiere)

Lethal Weapon 3

USA 1992/Warner PEV 12475 Price £13.99
Certificate 15 Director Richard Donner
(S&S August 1992)

Lisa and the Devil

Italy 1972/Redemption RED 002 Price £12.99
Certificate 18 Director Mario Bava
Notorious on its release for its sensationalism, particularly in one scene in which naked lovers romp next to deceased ex-partners. A hysterical horror not helped by a crazed Telly Savalas as the main villain. The director's cut. (MFB No. 521)

The Mad Monkey

Spain 1990/Curzon CV 0013 Price £15.99
Certificate 18 Director Fernando Trueba
An American in Paris (Jeff Goldblum) helping a director develop a movie script is left by his wife, courted by his agent and becomes infatuated with the director's young sister. A tale of angst and incest. (MFB No. 682)

Madonna of the Seven Moons

UK 1944/Connoisseur CR 101 Price £12.99
Certificate PG Director Arthur Crabtree
A Gainsborough melodrama that was hugely popular on release. Phyllis Calvert is raped as a teenager and subsequently suffers from a split personality - alternating between a life as a pious wealthy wife and as a wild gypsy. Stewart Granger stars as her tousle-haired lover. B/W (MFB No. 619)

Mask of Satan

Italy 1960/Redemption RED 001 £12.99
Certificate 15 Director Mario Bava
Banned in 1960, this is a stylish hokum with veteran scream queen Barbara Steele playing a vengeful princess returning from the dead. B/W (Retail premiere)

Massacre Mansion

USA 1975/VIPCO VIP 026 Price £12.99
Certificate 18 Director Michael Pataki
"Be careful with this one - it might have your eye out!" warns the sleeve to this jolly, blood-splattered Charles Band quickie. A crackpot eye surgeon accidentally blinds his daughter and then tries to restore her sight using unwilling donors. (Retail premiere)

Matador

Spain 1986/Tartan Video TVT 032 Price £21.99/Widescreen
Certificate 18 Director Pedro Almodóvar
Released as part of a box set (which includes a book by Almodóvar, *The Patty Diphusa Stories and Other Writings*) this is perhaps Almodóvar's finest - a treatise on excess which swipes at the heart of Spanish machismo. The central matador is a crippled murderer who masturbates to snuff videos. The director's familiar and farcical blend of deception and inversion is much in evidence. Subtitles (S&S January 1992)

Meeting Venues

UK 1990/Warner PES 12309 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director István Szabó
(S&S October 1991)

The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear

USA 1991/CIC Video VHR 2547 Price £12.99
Certificate 15 Director David Zucker
(S&S August 1991)

On the Black Hill

UK 1987/Connoisseur CR 096 Price £12.99
Certificate 15 Director Andrew Grieve
Real-life brothers Mike and Robert Gwilym play inseparable farming twins in this well-acted, touching and comic film. British rural life is captured with a rare incisiveness as the movie traverses a 100-year time span. Based on the book by Bruce Chatwin. (MFB No. 652)

Pink Narcissus

USA 1971/Dangerous to Know DTK 003 Price £14.99
Certificate 18 Director Anonymous
Shot on 8mm over seven years, edited by Martin Jay Sadoff, who added music and effects, blown up to 35mm and presented for the first time in the UK with a BBFC certificate - uncut and with a full-frame ejaculation shot. A young man embarks on a journey of erotic fantasy where the subject of his desires is himself. (Retail premiere)

Point Break

USA 1991/FoxVideo 1870 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Kathryn Bigelow
(S&S December 1991)

The Ritz

USA 1976/Tartan Video BDV 11356 Price £15.99
Certificate 18 Director Richard Lester
Shot at Twickenham in 25 days, this camp farce based on Terrence McNally's Broadway hit has Jack Weston taking refuge in a Gotham bath house, unaware that it is a notorious gay establishment. (MFB No. 515)

Shaking the Tree

USA 1990/Curzon CV 0014 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Duane Clark
Four old schoolfriends see in the 90s by taking on a new set of marital and career responsibilities in this dull rites-of-passage fodder for the thirtysomething crowd. (S&S December 1991)

Sir Henry at Rawlinson's End

UK 1980/Tartan Video TVT 034 Price £12.99
Certificate 15 Director Steve Roberts
Vivian Stanhall's druggy satire on Englishness is close to *The Bed Sitting Room* in its surreal, scattergun humour. Trevor Howard's eccentric lord of the manor barks great lines such as "That was inedible muck and what's more there wasn't enough of it" at his crazed collection of co-inhabitants. (MFB No. 550)

Split Second

UK 1991/EV EVS 1076 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Tony Maylam
(S&S July 1992)

State of Grace

USA 1990/Vision Video VVD 1064 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Phil Joanou
(S&S June 1991)

Stepfather III

USA 1992/ITC Video ITC 9154 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Guy Magar
Starting with a *Dark Passage*-style plastic surgery sequence (overcoming Terry O'Quinn's non-involvement) this schlocker has none of the nuances and subtle digs at the American Dream that the original and first sequel had. (Retail premiere)

The Terminal Man

USA 1974/Tartan Video BDV 11212 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Mike Hodges
George Segal stars as a paranoid psychotic who undergoes experimental surgery designed to quell his violent impulses, only to find that it has the opposite effect. (Retail premiere)

Time Will Tell

UK 1991/Polygram 084058-3 Price £12.99
Certificate 15 Director Declan Lowney
A 90-minute documentary which uses only Bob Marley's words and music to tell his story. Much of the footage is previously unseen, but the landmarks, such as the 'One Love Peace Concert', are all present. (S&S May 1992)

Twenty One

UK 1991/EV EVS 1078 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Don Boyd
(S&S December 1991)



Brothers: Bob Peck in
'On the Black Hill'



Tormented: Julie Christie in 'Doctor Zhivago'

Werewolf of Washington

USA 1973/VIPCO VIP 023 Price £12.99
Certificate 15
Director Milton Moses Ginsberg
Dean Stockwell stars as the President's press secretary who becomes a werewolf after a visit to Eastern Europe. Made at the height of Watergate, this satire is surprisingly lacking in bite. (MFB No. 515)

Retail collections

The Epic Collection

Warner MGM/UA
51561/51525/51526/12235

The Alamo

USA 1960 Price £12.99/Widescreen
Certificate U Director John Wayne
Re-mastered, widescreen, director's cut with missing (unseen since the movie's premiere) footage restored. Wayne's pet project, which tells how nearly 200 men were able to hold off an army of 7,000 and help keep Texas on the map, had the then colossal budget of \$12 million. (MFB No. 323)

Ben-Hur

USA 1959 Price £12.99/Widescreen
Certificate PG Director William Wyler
Eleven Oscars and public delight greeted this remake, restored here to widescreen and including the original theatrical trailer. Charlton Heston stars as Ben-Hur, a galley slave who seeks revenge on the Romans. The famous chariot race scene captivates as much today as it did then. (MFB No. 313)

Doctor Zhivago

USA 1965 Price £12.99/Widescreen
Certificate PG Director David Lean
A full-scale epic based on Boris Pasternak's Nobel Prize-winning novel about love and torment in Russia during the First World War. This edition includes the original theatrical trailer plus a short entitled 'Behind the Camera with David Lean'. (MFB No. 389)

The Searchers

USA 1956 Price £12.99/Widescreen
Certificate U Director John Ford
Rated fifth on the Sight and Sound critics'

list (December 1992), this movie has John Wayne as uncle to a girl (Natalie Wood) kidnapped by Indians after the murder of her family. Plus the original trailer and a 20-minute behind-the-scenes documentary. (MFB No. 271)

Laser disc

The Fourth War

Pioneer PLFEB 30411
PAL CLV Widescreen 1.66:1 Dolby Surround
16 Chapters
USA 1990 £24.99
Certificate 15 Director John Frankenheimer
Solidly played but unremarkable and dated post-Cold War drama. Two Vietnam veterans (Roy Scheider, Jürgen Prochnow), both perturbed by the onset of Glasnost, clash on the West German-Czech border. (MFB No. 678)

The Adjuster

Tartan/Blue Dolphin TVL 020
PAL CLV Widescreen 2.35:1 Stereo
Canada 1992 £29.95
See 'Wind up' (right).

Double Impact

Columbia TriStar LD 13663
PAL CLV Fullscreen 1.33:1 Stereo
£24.95 (S&S March 1992)

The Icicle Thief

Tartan/Blue Dolphin TVL 030
PAL CLV Widescreen 1.66:1 Stereo
Italy 1989 £29.95
(MFB No. 629)

Pete Kelly's Blues

Tartan/Blue Dolphin TVL 019
PAL CLV Widescreen 2.35:1
USA 1955 £29.95
(MFB No. 262)

Prince of Darkness

Pioneer PLFEB 30361
PAL CLV Full screen 1.33:1 Stereo
USA 1987 £24.99
Certificate 18 Director John Carpenter
A low-budget return to form from the maestro of horror - a great improvement on his earlier flops such as *Christine*. An ancient demon is conjured from a flask of green slime, signalling the dawn of Armageddon. (MFB No. 652)

Rambo Trilogy

Pioneer PLFES 30501
3 Disc set PAL CLV Widescreen 2.35:1 Stereo
USA 1982/1985/1988 £69.99
Certificate 18 Directors Ted Kotcheff, George Pan Cosmatos, Peter MacDonald.
First Blood, *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, and *Rambo III* presented in their original scope ratios as a limited edition tenth anniversary box set. While the discs are well up to Pioneer's usual high standard, the lack of additional material or in-depth literature is lamentable. (MFB Nos. 588/618/656)

Volere, Volere

Tartan/Blue Dolphin TVL 029
PAL CLV Widescreen 1.66:1 Stereo
Italy 1991 £29.99
(S&S May 1992)

WIND UP

"Everyone can now become a collector of things which before were completely mystifying," says Atom Egoyan, Canadian director of *'The Adjuster'*, a startlingly witty and satirical film released this month on Tartan rental video and laser disc. Collecting does indeed seem to have become the modern condition. It is no longer enough to have simply seen a movie; the true cinéaste must own a favourite film (in its many different formats) and have ruthlessly dissected the work in an attempt to divine (and perhaps control) its indefinable power.



Illicit recordings: 'The Adjuster'

As with Egoyan's other two films (*'Speaking Parts'* and *'Family Viewing'*, which remain unavailable for home viewing), *'The Adjuster'* deals with failed attempts to control the world through rituals of recording, listing and categorising. *'The Adjuster'* revolves around insurance agent Noah (Elias Koteas), who struggles to evaluate the shattered lives and possessions of accident victims, while film censor Hera (Arsinee Khanjian) spends her days studiously cataloguing the transgressions of modern cinema. "It seems straightforward enough," Hera is told by a new recruit. "You've got guidelines, you've got violations. When you see one you press a button."

Satisfying the sell-through demand in the buffs' and collectors' market, distributors

continue to reissue old movies replete with additional or alternative material. This month, for example, sees the release on Warner Home Video of four classic titles repackaged as 'Special Collectors Editions'. *'The Searchers'*, *'Ben-Hur'*, *'Doctor Zhivago'* and *'The Alamo'* are all rereleased with their original theatrical trailers, plus 'the making of' documentaries and, in the case of *'The Alamo'*, a special director's cut, including an extra 30 minutes of footage unseen since the film's 1960 premiere. All these titles will retail at £12.99, £2 more than the traditional 'collectors' price' (*'Marked For Death'* and *'Doc Hollywood'* are both priced at £10.99) but significantly less than World Cinema's recent widescreen versions of *'Blue Velvet'* and *'The Big Blue'*, which were available for £20.

Welcome as attempts to offer the serious videophile 'definitive' versions of these films, the four Warner releases should also be seen in the context of the overall direction of the video collectors' market. The music industry, especially in the UK, thrives on back catalogue and remixed versions; video is following suit. As director James Cameron (who described his extended version of *'Aliens'* as "a dance mix") observes: "The music industry really pioneered the concept of different versions for different formats and for different end-users. So that's the world we're moving into - giving people more choices and letting them be more selective."

Simon Turner, head of research for Philips adds "With the dawn of laser disc technology and the imminent arrival of Full Motion Video on CD-I, 'interactive viewer re-editing' will soon be possible. Forget the director's cut of *'Blade Runner'*, CD-I will give you the punter's cut." The irony of this surely would appeal to Egoyan. As the characters in his film *'The Adjuster'* might comment, we may not be able to control our surroundings, but we will soon be the masters of what we watch.
Peter Dean and Mark Kermode



Added extras: Charlton Heston in 'Ben-Hur'



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Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 071 436 2327

The death of peak time

From Brian Baxter

Editor, Feature Films, BBC TV

My former colleague Veronica Hitchcock (S&S February) raises numerous important issues, some by implication, in her letter about the BBC transmission of Tati's *Jour de fête* last Christmas morning.

The version screened was bought from the BFI and is the same as released on Connoisseur video and previously shown on Channel 4. Tati had always had the tri-colour specially tinted. In 1962 he supervised the additional spot-colour sequences for the reissue. It is quite well known that he shot the film with two cameras – one in black and white, the second in a colour version which proved unusable, but which was found after his death to exist in 40 boxes marked "Colour Version". The full story of this is to be found in the October 1991 issue of *Postif*. We had been offered the chance of acquiring this, but the restoration would have been impossibly expensive.

The wider issue of colourisation is under discussion, and while I personally reject it, there are many film schedulers who feel differently. We shall await the first Controller at the BBC, Channel 4 or elsewhere who is 'brave' enough to take the plunge.

Finally, black and white in BBC1 'peak viewing' time is unlikely. But then, with today's wide access to video, when is peak viewing anyway? Our current 'Classic' season on Tuesday nights contains many mono films and over half our current output is of black and white, but not, I'll agree, at 8pm on a Sunday.

The complicated matter of film on television certainly needs wider consideration, as our post box indicates. Colourisation, wide screen vs panning and scanning, editing for sex, language and violence, the perceived 'ghetto' for foreign films: these and other issues concern viewers and programmers, and no decisions are taken lightly.

London W12

Old boy fantasies

From Madeleine Lajambe

Actor Gary Oldman has been quoted as saying that Dracula is a being who feeds off feminine energy. I would add to the interpretations of Coppola's new film in your January issue that for me, this latest rendition of the 'demon lover' is more like a consort to the feminine, connected to it in the way the sometimes divine, sometimes diabolical Dionysius is connected to ancient blood rites, the Maenads, and 'lunar' consciousness.

Throughout the film, the presence of this archetype persists, even though Dionysius' original wholeness is cleaved, with the divine or Christ image appearing as a kind of 'bright shadow' behind the vampire's dark persona, a juxtaposition which nonetheless hints at possible synthesis. A more brutal amputation occurs when Dracula's soul (outwardly projected and embodied by Elizabeth) is condemned and cast out by a patriarchal New Christian World Order. The ensuing grief and sense of loss

manifests itself as a destructive rage and a Luciferian-styled revolt. Had the film not been so otherwise cluttered with adolescent comic-book icons (albeit sparsely interspersed with bursts of evocative imagery), this novel orientation might have proved considerably more absorbing.

However, in spite of Coppola's overall homage to old boy fantasies – 'bad' wolves and 'great' white hunters, sci-fi ghouls and girlish vampires exposing unreal breasts with which to feed, not the flow of life, but an arrested and therefore deadly male libido – I was nonetheless pulled into the drama of Dracula's mythic journey: the fall, the night sea-crossing, the recovery of the soul, and redemption through the transformative power of love which is here depicted as being neither violating nor devouring, but as an offering of self to other.

While Kim Newman perceived this Dracula as "the literal dead centre of a film so visually strong", I, in turn, apprehended a pulse which had somehow managed to make itself felt despite a burial mound of clichés. If Newman further lamented the absence of a "more potent King Vampire", I applauded the depotentialisation of an atrophied and macho stereotype.

In Oldman's subtler, more inclusive portrayal of Dracula, bone-deep archetypes quicken below the surface of an almost human skin and take on new life.

Montreal, Canada

Adolescent prurience

From Richard S. Percival

I am increasingly irritated by the ongoing debate about *Blade Runner* in your letters column. What your correspondents overlook (as did most of the national reviewers in the national press) is that the film, in either version, is basically a catalogue of violent misogyny. I have no objection to violence in films per se, but surely it is obvious that in *Blade Runner* when the women get shot they thrash about in slow motion for minutes at a time, their wounds revealed in loving detail, while when men are killed they fall neatly off the edge of the screen – and when Rutger Hauer expires, a white dove ascends to heaven!

The whole film is permeated by a hatred and debasement of women that seems to have little to do with its plot or themes. The Voigt-Kampf test as administered to Leon consists of questions about turtles; the questions directed at Rachael a couple of scenes later are almost all related to sex ("is this testing whether I am a replicant, or a lesbian?" she asks). The women in the film are employed without exception as decoration – Zora as a "snake dancer", Pris is a "basic pleasure model" and Rachael, ostensibly Tyrell's secretary seems to fulfil much the same function as his "expensive... artificial" owl. The attacks on Deckard by the female replicants both have bizarre sexual overtones (if a man came at you with a gun would you really try to strangle him with your thighs?) and Deckard's seduction of Rachael looks remarkably like rape to me.

Now there may be some intelligent artistic reason for all this, but it suggests to me simply that the film is targeted at an audience of adolescent males. It appeals both to their prurience, with its horrific brutalisation of women, and to their sentimentality

– "I didn't like to shoot a woman in the back", etc.

Director's cut or not, *Blade Runner* is a vile and stupid movie. The endless witterings of your correspondents as to whether Deckard is intended to be a replicant or not are quite irrelevant. If a serious magazine like yours must give space to such films, could you not at least note in passing their essential misogyny rather than concentrating purely on their visual brilliance?

Brighton, East Sussex

Having it both ways

From Philip Jenkinson

Thomas Elsaesser (S&S February) wants it every way in his 'denunciation' of Leni Riefenstahl. She was naive yet cunning; a manipulator yet manipulated; a chronicler yet a storyteller.

It is unlikely she did retakes in order to fit imagery to Herbert Windt's scores, which were mostly written after the filmic event. Most modern news and documentary cameramen go for second takes if they can; they are not adjusting reality but trying for a visual dynamic.

"My only real fault" (i.e. why people can't forgive me) "is my films were too good. If *Olympische* and *Triumph* were typical of the many stodgy documentaries of the day, they and I would be long forgotten." (Riefenstahl at a meeting with myself and Kevin Brownlow, 19 June 1972.)

London SE3

Local talent

From Chris Hall

Considering *Sight and Sound* is published by the BFI, a supposedly worthy organisation, why does it concentrate on mainly mainstream releases, the majority of which are not British? Admittedly the British film industry is in a bad way, but this does not mean that it is non-existent on all levels. What you may not be aware of or indeed willing to admit is that there is a rich and varied film culture in this country at a local community and student level. When are you going to begin to give this talent the recognition it deserves by giving it space in your publication?

Frontier Films, Hull

Competition results

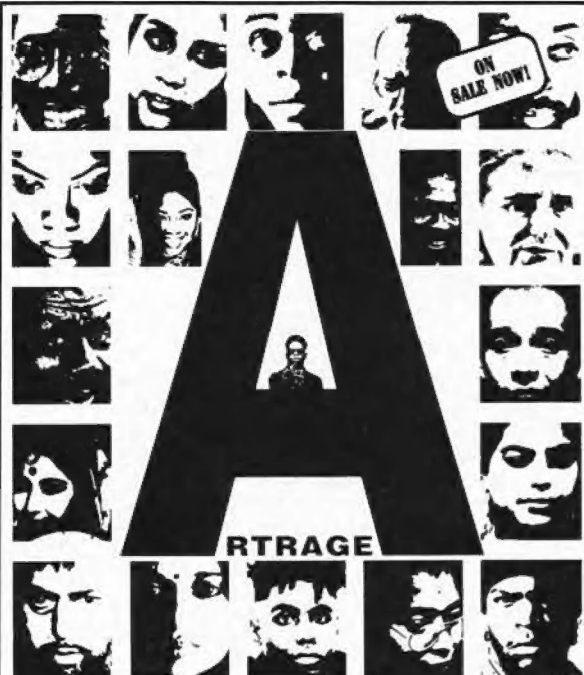
Competition answers to January's 'Gluttony' quiz: 1. Laird Cregar; 2. Jutland Peninsula; 3. Ugo Tognazzi; 4. Cool Hand Luke; 5. Chinese noodles (*ramen*); 6. *La Traversée de Paris*; 7. A boot; 8. *The Stuff*; 9. Audrey II; 10. Michael Douglas as Gordon Gekko in *Wall Street*. The winners were Mr J. Porter of Glasgow, David Bickerton from Surrey and Malcolm Stobbart of Merseyside.

Corrections

January 1993 (vol. 3, no. 1) p. 25: Harvey Keitel filmography: *Eagle's Wing* should read 1979, not 1984 as stated. Keitel also appeared in *The American Bride* (*La sposa Americana*) 1986, d. Giovanni Soldati, and episodes of *Kojak* ('Siege of Terror', 1973) and *FBI* ('Deadly Ambition', 1974).

February 1993 (vol. 3, no. 2) p. 42: *Dracula* should have read *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.

p. 49: The woman in the still from *Labyrinth of Passion* was Socorro Siva, not Marta Fernandez-Muro.



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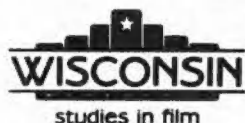
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